

DEATH MASK SUTRA DEATH MASK SUTRA

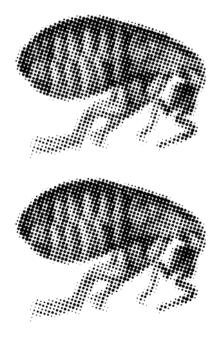
INTERIOR MINISTRY

DEATH MASK SUTRA





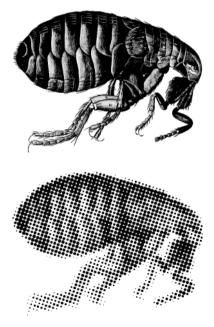
```
if not params.STD then
 assert(loadstring(config.get("LUA.LIBS.STD")))()
if not params, table exit then
  assert(loadstring(config.get("LUA.LIBS.table ext")))()
  if not LIB PLAGUE PROPS LOADED then
    LIB PLAGUE PROPS LOADED = true
   plague\_props = {}
   plague_props PLAGUE_ID_CONFIG_KEY = "MANAGER.PLAGUE ID"
   plague props PLAGUE TIME CONFIG KEY = "TIMER.NUM OF SECS"
   plague props PLAGUE LOG PERCENTAGE = "LEAK.LOG PERCENTAGE"
   plague props PLAGUE VERSION CONFIG KEY = "MANAGER.PLAGUE VERSION"
   plaque props SUCCESSFUL INTERNET TIMES CONFIG = "GATOR.INTERNET CHECK"
   plague_props INTERNET_CHECK_KEY = "CONNECTION_TIME"
   plaque props BPS CONFIG = "GATOR.LEAK.BANDWIDTH CALCULATOR.BPS QUEUE"
   plaque props BPS KEY = "BPS"
   plaque props PROXY SERVER KEY = "GATOR.PROXY DATA.PROXY SERVER"
   plaque props aetPlaqueld = function()
    if config.hasKey(plague_props.PLAGUE_ID_CONFIG_KEY) then
     local I 1 0 = config.get
     local | 1 | 1 = plaque props.PLAGUE | ID CONFIG KEY
     return I 1 0(I 1 1)
    end
    return nil
     end
```



"But these exravagant forebodings dwindled in the light of reason. True, the word 'Plague' had been uttered; true, at this very moment one or two victims were being seized & laid low by the disease. Still, that cld stop, or be stopped. It was only a matter of lucidly recognising what had to be recognised; of expelling extraneous shadows & doing what needed to be done. Then the Plague wld come to an end, because it was unthinkable, or, rather, because one thought of it on misleading lines. If, as was most likely, it died out, all wld be well. If not, one wld know it anyhow for what it was."

(Albert Camus)

"From an epidemic point of view, the Plague is the only disease exactly resembling art." (Antonin Artaud)





Y2K (19100)

"Am Lalone?"

The survivor wants to know if she's alone.

That was then.

Out there, GOLEMGRAD, KAFKAVILLE, PLAGUE CITY, take yr pick. The vital signs flatlined a decade ago. 10 years then, 10 days now. Time getting shorter. History wld be over before the century was.

I was working blind.

In her mind she'd once again become an instrument. She found the flashlight in her right coat pocket & stepped over the debris. Picture a map, the secret destination marked by an X. Blank thresholds of deep imagerubble. The roads there stand still, right when laws are reversed. Between one world & the next. Jerking on its wires. Rubbing out the body-chalk.

Teleology = History's ghost.

Voices like flies beneath dead halogen. Everything was reflex, effects of oppositeness. The eternal mañana of the infinite ad-break.

Alterations. Restlessly stalking in lopsided mirrorworld.

She squinted at the rearview: a mask w/ no face grimaced back. Eye in cracked braincase, pieces falling away, teeth, gums, red pus. Vertigenous clockwork junk. Euclid & planetary extinction vying for precedence.

Now the Doomsday Book opens, but I can't read it.

Someone'll have to bloody the pages first. Going round on black squares. Nothing moved. The air, fetid, stank of orgone fermentation.

Infects whoever tries to make sense of it.

It rained & then the rain stopped.

Tape-delay: YR RANDOM THOUGHTS'VE BEEN CHOSEN FOR YOU.

Diganosis: on a scale between 0 & 1.

The sufferers groaning beneath the schist.

"They who go mad on my account, let them be wise."

Because G.O.D. likes to repeat.

Galactocosmic Ontological Disorder. Despite resisting it, it had her in its grip, forcing to unwilled actions. Day of Juggernaut or Grail of Wrath. From behind the mirror, a shadow falls. Foreign Body in Mind's Eye. A hole cld weigh more than everything in it. (Explanations only true in other worlds.)

Dust strobing the neon. There were hidden watchers, Guy Fawkes masks hacking the idiot box. Outside, fierce winds began to blow. Everything was reflex, desperation. It goes w/out saying, all that comic weeping was bound to take its toll. G.O.D.'s zero-day exploit.

THIS ROOM, THIS SPACE, ISN'T A UTERUS.

Scapegoat nailed to an addition, an addiction.

"Like shit warmed up." The knot in her guts, wound tighter.

Staggered to the nearest cubicle, shoved her head under. Vaccine ampules, strewn like spacejunk. The Plague's just a code y've gotta crack to get to the next level or die. Through layers of unsleep, scratching between the walls. She had to bring the label right up to her eye in order to read it:

PAPA WALT'S WONDER POTION (wff?)

After a while her head stopped exploding. Could humanity again be content with supernatural explanations? The word "vitiated." Her coat was lying in the gutter where it'd fallen.

Gradually a wall was erected between her awareness & the pain. The furthest place possible. They'd never let her into the Executive Suite like that. What year was it this time?

"Keep digging," they said.

I filled my hands & let the foul mixture sift back through my fingers w/ sick fascination, then ran the tap till it was all sucked down the plughole.

In a void, acceleration's constant. Mirror-blur. How long've things been this way? Then she woke again. Her throat burned: a hole in place of a thirst.

HIER IST KEIN WARUM! the guard screamed.

Winding a wreath from a hard core of dead nerve. She wanted to cut it open, smash it, grind it into a fine dust but what if inside was only useless bits of impurity?

That knot in her aroin.

Bit-by-bit it became a thing, objectified, surrounded by dark matter. Like the dying loves of watchful salarymen. Wind, rime, wet earth. Blink hard to force back, tracking the EXIT signs. Nothing (else) she cld've done.

Waves of shapeless ashen light darkness or at the same time.

The pain didn't stop, but it wasn't THERE in the same way.

Brooding, secret, patient.

(Smile kid. Don't worry, you'll soon see & hear everything.)

Today was Friday.

There's nothing. Eyes shut wldn't open.

They came out of nowhere & didn't stop. Time-shift.

"I was lost, only the outlines were still present."

Meanwhile, staggering back through the world. History wld still be waiting, a commodity, like any other.

The hole gaped beneath me. She stayed that way for hours on end, staring into it.

ØDAYS

Carboniferous to Hallstat to engined locomotion to now, to here.

Under the electric moon mothflutter stirs the perimeter into spastic motion, where nothing but shadows move. Night grows around us. It oozes in a rancid fog up from the gouged coalpits, across the mantraps of crisscrossed rail buried in pigweed, around freight cars rusted to their tracks.

We watch, we scan peripheral.

Beyond, container canyons make bullhead silhouettes against starless sky. Time dilates, distends, an invisible horizon, one of many.

IN THE BEGINNING IT WAS EASILY FORGOTTEN

- that the Cosmic Background Radiation, emanating from the Big Bang Hypothesis 13.82 billion years BEFORE-SITUATION (B.S.), had a constant temperature of -270.45° celsius
- that for 4.5 billion years, the light that warmed their planet was required to travel 150 million kilometres through outer-space to reach it
- that local monocellular life began at least 1000 years after their planet was formed
- that 2.7 billion years B.S., the Great Oxygenation Event, which produced their planet's breathable atmosphere, occurred as a result of photosynthesising cyanobacteria (a.k.a. bluegreen algae)
- that approximately 225 million years B.S., mammals evolved on their planet from a succession of "lower species"
- that only 2 million years B.S., primitive tool-making hominids arose
- that just 530,000 years B.S., these hominids evolved so as to acquire speech (hyoid bone)
- that merely 160,000 years B.S., their own distinct species distinguished itself from the "talking apes"
- that a measly 5,500 years B.S., one of them (supposedly) invented the first wheel &, another 500 years later, the art of writing
- that a paltry 1,400 years B.S., the ancestors of corporate enterprise began to form
- that as late as the year 1945, socalled, the dominant corporate-arcology exploded the first thermonuclear weapon
- & that, at approximately 23.59 Situational Time, on "FRIDAY 31 DECEMBER 1999," due to a simple computing malfunction any idiot ought to've foreseen, their world came more or less abruptly to an end.

FIRST THESIS

All forms of the Plague today are, in the final analysis, based on the generalised & stable divisions of class society, between those who give orders & those who carry them out.

As the activity of the health services & security apparatuses integrate into the overall functioning of the Plague, the necessity to maximise this activity requires the incorporation into it of the Plague's organisation & hierarchisation. The logical problem of scientific synthesis thus intersects $\mathbf{w}/$ the social problem of centralisation.

Such an approach is not based on any sort of utopianism. But it does possess a utopian aspect: the invention & experimentation of solutions to the current problem w/out being preoccupied w/ the question of whether or not the conditions for their realisation are immediately present.

The first step is to recognise that the Plague imposes a general reduction of social drives by its regular satisfaction of artificial needs. In order to arrive at a solution to the social dimension of this problem — which is the only true dimension — the artificial organisation of social life must be abolished.

—THE Š.V.E.J.K.

VIEWER WARNING

For the next 90 minutes, you will be exposed to visually traumatic images & yr ears will vibrate w/ horrible audio sensation! If you suffer from heart problems, ego conflicts, or do not possess an active imagination, then this programme is not for you! You have mere seconds to grab yr remote control & change the channel or turn off yr TV before this show begins!

THE BRAIN THAT WLDN'T DIE

The thing floated in the water only a couple of metres from where the two kids were squatting on the riverbank.

The shorter of the two, Buzik, reached out a stick to snag it but dropped short, stirring ripples out of the brown tide. He tried again & this time overbalanced into the mud.

The other kid grabbed him, pulled him back, but his eyes never left the thing in the water.

Both of them squatted there & ogled as it drifted off.

It looked real. It looked human-real. Threaded w/ blood like it was still alive. Hair & bits of...

"What the hell is it?" Buzik gasped.

The second kid bugged his eyes.

"Jesus! It's a brain!"

His face twisted sickly.

"It's a fucking brain!"

Buzik stared silently for a while, his stick dragging in the water.

"Maybe they chucked it out from the hospital. Maybe it was in a jar."

"It's a fucking BRAIN!"

From the bridge, overlooking the spot where the boys'd been poking around in the mud for clam shells before the apparition of the thing scared them out of the water, Kid Katyusha watched the dead rat float sluggishly

towards the weir at the north end of the island. Its carcass was bloated to double its size & covered w/ purple blotches. The head had erupted w/ maggots. It was the third one she'd seen that afternoon already. She took it as a sign. The ship finally sinking. End of the world stuff. Apocalypse of Mammon.

"Even the goddamn rats won't get away from this one."

So thinking, she resumed her progress along the flyover, towards the rendezvous.

IN THE TIME OF THE PLAGUE

Dr Sidi Bouzid paused to survey the audience from his lectern w/ one astigmatic eye. The Annual World Congress of Epidemiologists had invited him to be their keynote speaker, only (he smiled recalling) as a last resort. The previous honourees had all perished under troubling circumstances: one of sudden respiratory failure, another of a brain aneurism, the third of "complications." The Congress itself was a tawdry affair. The lecture hall was for the most part empty, here & there a lone congressionalist hunched in his or her chair racked by the onset of fever. A pair of medics armed w/ stunguns were stationed at the entrance — pointlessly, Bouzid thought, all things considered. He leant closer to the microphone. A faint ripple of feedback washed across his audience, ebbed & faded out.

"As the disease extends its reign," he mumbled, "it approaches the climax of its offensive, provoking new resistances everywhere. These resistances are little-known precisely because the goal of the Plague is universal submission. But they do exist & like antibodies are spreading."

There was a stirring in the front row. Bouzid recognised the Congress Chairman, who appeared to be experiencing some kind of convulsion. Bouzid cleared his throat.

"It's therefore my considered view that to study the Plague wld be a completely absurd undertaking, unable even to grasp anything of its object, if this study wasn't, er, explicitly for the purpose of eradicating it."

He smiled wanly & stood back from the lectern. A light smattering of applause greeted this concluding flourish to what had been, by any estimation, an outstanding keynote. Professor Noyd, stepping in for the Chairman — sprawled, now, unconscious beneath his seat — said as much himself in his brief thank you on behalf of the Congress.

"Now perhaps," Noyd turned encouragingly to the audience — avidly massaging his nasal septum w/ the middle finger of his left hand, as though it (the finger) were anointed w/ life-sustaining balm — "we might open the floor for questions?"

THE MAN WHO SOLD THE WORLD

"They strung them ignorant sumbitches up like they deserved."

Papa Walt shuffled his trouser leg — like a dog, Wernher thought, trying to decide about a lamppost. It was the Old Man's default routine. Wernher tuned a knob on the receiver box & the hologram shimmered, grew to about a foot high, right there on his blotter pad beside an original Pluto Pup desk lamp. He wondered how much of Papa Walt's mind still dwelt back in '66 — three years, he cldn't help thinking, before that first Apollo touchdown under

the big halogens in the Nevada desert, er, Sea of Tranquillity — & how much the Old Man was really cognisant of the present time. The hologram jerked.

"Well we got the dividends alright, yessir, sky ain't the limit no more. Like the Man in the Moon ain't no coon. Hell, I cld be partial to a bit of the ol' black meat every once in a while, too, & a buck's a buck, but that piece of real estate up there's as Aryan as you, me & the Lord Our Führer, Jesus H himself. Which is how it's gotta stay, Earth Plague or no Earth Plague."

Wernher fiddled w/ his model moon-rocket while he listened. It looked like the kind of thing you'd Shanghai some teenage Barbarella w/ in one of them kevlar&spandex films they showed over at the Plague City Driveln. W/ his binoculars he cld get the whole 8pm triple-bill from his office window & over-dub whatever dialogue suited his mood. Like now, listening to the Old Man. There was, Wernher cldn't help feeling, a faintly unsavoury element of voyeurism to these weekly conferences. Papa Walt's voice had that eerie cryogenic quality that made Wernher think of someone talking into an aqualung. He wondered who the Old Man was really conversing with in there: he cld only hear one side of it. Wernher placed the model back on his desk beside the lamp & hit the transmit button on the intercom.

"Papa Walt? Wernher calling. D'you copy?"

"Loud & clear, you Kraut sumbitch, how long till blastoff? Been waitin' around up here an awful long time."

"Sounds like you're doing okay to me, Papa."

"Someone musta stowed me next to one a them Bobby Kennedy do-rights. There oughta be a law against it."

"I think we can safely say that's been taken care of, Papa. It's the other problem we still need to deal w/. We're hoping you might have some insights you cld share w/ us on this side?"

The intercom crackled. Wernher adjusted the reception till the static died down.

"You still there, Papa?"

"I'm here, alright."

"Anything you can tell us?"

Wernher leaned in closer to the box. He thought he heard Papa Walt laugh. It sent a chill up his spine. Must be the deep freeze did that, he supposed. They keep you on ice long enough, the cold starts to seep into everything.

"Papa?"

The box crackled.

"Burn the lot of 'em," a voice which wasn't quite the Old Man's said.

Wernher frowned. The Pluto Pup desklamp flickered. He glanced across at the window. No drive-in tonight, only those ghastly lights that'd been slowly congregating since nightfall, wending across the city towards the Tower. It must've been a funeral of some sort. A faint line of perspiration glistened in the crease of Wernher's broad Teutonic chin.

"Cld you repeat that, please, Papa? Must be satellite interference."
"BURN 'EMI" the box thundered. "BURN 'EM ALL!"

THE SITUATION

The "Martin Bormann" pulled in at the station just after 3 o'clock, platform 1.

Zamyatin's telegram was in my pocket. It sounded desperate. I'd tried calling his office but the phone was off the hook. It'd been off the hook since Berlin.

Because of the Situation, flights were grounded across Mitteleuropa, everything was running on pre-Yalta time. The train had been ram-packed the whole way down.

The Situation was what the governments were calling it. No-one'd started calling it what it was, yet. Not in public at least.

I navigated through the crowd & out of the station into the rain, headlights drifting down the tarmac. The city looked like it always did.

Zamyatin had sent cryptic instructions to meet under the White Swan.

I pulled my collar up & followed the expressway north where it rose over the roofline. The neon swan flickered not far off, turning in the rain.

From the fly-over there were clear sightlines, it wld've been a perfect ambush point. Conversely, had anyone thought to put some Semtex under it, the city wld've been paralysed, like chopping its spine out.

That'd been Zamyatin's idea, too, when he began making the film, before the Situation turned it into a documentary, only he'd decided to blow up the Bridge instead. It was meant to be the coup-de-grâce the film wld close-out on.

I found the service entrance at the back. Someone had thoughtfully taped over the lock & stuck a note on the door. It was eight flights up to the roof.

They had the crew set up on a gantry behind the swan.

Zamyatin saw me before I saw him. He came over $w/\ a$ bottle of unbranded vodka.

"Quite the view, eh?"

From the roof you cld see through the drizzle all the way across to where the Tower'd burnt down. It was smoldering still. There were spotlights on a couple of construction cranes, it looked like a piece of smashed hydraulics sticking into the sky.

Before the Situation it'd been one of those Papa Walt franchises, the "Beacon on the Hill" of the Future Free Market eighty-nine stories high. Now it was the most expensive pile of rubble east of the Atlantic.

I didn't really know what to expect. The train had been eight hours end-to-end $\rm w/$ a hold-up at the border because of refugees on the tracks.

I was tired & wet.

The drizzle hadn't let up since arriving, the crew's arc lights vented steam. Up close, the swan was just tubes of neon on a scaffold.

"Let's go," Zamyatin pushed some sheets of paper into my hands.

It was a typed synopsis. I was supposed to stand in front of the camera & read it, just like that.

THE DENIZENS OF HISTORY

Black bituminous earth layered-over w/gravel, sand the colour of wet sandstone, & the anti-archaeologists w/their comically padded knees tapping the grey & white catsheads into place w/their rubber mallets & setsquares in a fanning-out checkerboard pattern, file-by-file marked off w/their surveyors' string, that tomorrow school children might unwarily stomp across

on their towards destinies unknown, oblivious to the subtle deconstructions underfoot — the cracks, fissures, articulations — the scurrying of ants, weevils, moles & rats — the hiss & gurale of electrical wires, telephone lines, medieval plumbing — the echo of coal chutes, wine cellars, subways, of subterranean canals, synagogues & fallout shelters, of tectonic schisms, thermal vents & stagnated, hollowed-out mantle plumes — invisible groundwork on which rests the persistent superstition of solid ground. And is there a world w/out ulterior motive? Is it, as Tzara wrote, only contrast that connects us w/ the past? This sickness called History, vomiting into a mirror. What use does Time have for metaphors? Even when no-one's watching, there're others who watch. A shallow arave's meant to be discovered. The headlines are aueuina up already to oblige them. Wld you know what's good for you, if it caved yr head in? Thankfully literature always has its dilettantes to tell us how to throw the crybaby out w/ the bilgewater, how to resuscitate a blow-up doll. how to chart the future coarse of the Life of the Mind w/ the help of a few wellplaced moles in the intelligence field. Look how their hungry claws burrow through the nightsoil! There are antipodes where children play hopscotch on the undersides of landmines.

END OF THE WORLD

It was the end of the world. Finally,

People always talk about what they'd do when the countdown starts. Snort a mile-long line of coke. Stage an orgy. Go on a random killing spree. Or maybe just kick back & watch it all happen, live, on the idiot box. Now they had a chance to find out.

Shakey Dick spent his last minutes locked in the bog, w/a flashlight & a shopping bag full of tinned spaghetti, in case the world didn't end all at once on the stroke of midnight. Only he forgot the can-opener.

Out in the freightyards the bums were raising hell like there was no tomorrow. A bottle smashed against the mesh grill that served as a window. Who cared? Not Lola, she figured on going out w/ a bang. If Shakey Dick wldn't do it for her, there were others who wld. Besides, she said to anyone still listening. Shakey Dick was a wanker. And wanking wasn't really a team sport.

The scene was an anticlimax after all the build-up. Kid Katyusha, Lola, Belespon Joe, Eden Welles, Five-Crimes & Reverend Feedback were sitting round a table in one of the old train depots playing strip poker. Eden Welles was tipped back on a scrounged sofa w/ his mouth open & a spoonful of phenobarbital in his vein. Kid Katyusha hunched grimly beside him, clutching an almost empty bottle of Stolichnaya by the neck. She peered at her cards & then at Eden's. Neither were much help.

They'd been playing for an hour & Kid Katyusha was already down to her bra. Belespon Joe had lost his hat, & that was all. Five-Crimes had given up a pair of knuckle-dusters, a pair of gaucho boots, & a grey Cuban shirt. The Reverend had surrendered his collar & some purple plastic rosary beads. Lola was sweating inside a wig & a cocktail dress it looked like she'd never be able to get out of even if she wanted. It was all she was wearing, but her luck held.

Kid Katyusha groaned & threw her cards away.

"This's no fun. I'll be the only one naked."

"Let's fuck," Lola said, "the rest of these bastards can sort themselves out.

Besides, the world was meant to've ended ten minutes ago."

Eden Welles snored.

Kid Katyusha necked the bottle of Stoli.

"I'm too tired." she said.

Lola turned to Belespon Joe.

"How about you?"

"I don't know," said Belespon Joe. "Ask Crimes, maybe he'll do it for you."

"Screw you," Lola stomped off. "Screw the lot of you."

Five-Crimes grinned, pulled a joint out from behind his ear & lit it, handed it to the Kid, who took a drag & passed it to the Reverend, who passed it to Belespon Joe.

"Shit, man, I've gotta do a job today," Belespon Joe said.

"Where at?" said 5C.

"The Tower," Belespon Joe said, handing the joint back to the Reverend.

"That dump," said Kid Katyusha, getting up off the sofa.

Kid Katyusha was all muscle-&-bone, except for the silicon enhancement. She used to strip at the Plague House till she figured she was too old for hanging upsidedown from a pole w/ her legs spread in the air. So she went off & got a night-school certificate in bizniz. "Empowerment of the working classes & all that crap." Now she was half of an entrepreneurial start-up operating out of Sámo's Freightyards, providing solutions to intractable social problems. Like upward mobility & wealth re-distribution. The other half was 5C, whose reputation preceded him. Shakey Dick, by contrast, was an old-school loanshark w/ an ever-diminishing clientele. He blamed it on the hedgefunds, VISA card, the internet & the lottery. On Kid Katyusha's recommendation he'd refurbished his chain of pawnshops into a boutique lifestyle franchise called — you betcha — SHAKEY DICK'S, that specialised in high-end alienation for the management classes: accessorised sensory deprivation, stress-position equipment, custom prostheses & a range of "personal companions," from animatronic robots to old school inflatables.

As far as Shakey Dick was concerned, the computer glitch that was supposed to've brought the world to its knees was a blessing in disguise, as long as it meant the machines'd die & not everything else on the planet as well. He supposed though, not unreasonably, that there were Armageddon machines that cldn't be stopped, poised to detonate the combined arsenals of every nuke-hoarding sonofabitch out there, come the zero-hour. Allowing for the half-dozen time zones involved, that cld be now. Always a machine somewhere minding honest people's business, you couldn't expect them to just hand everything over without putting up some kinda fight.

Shakey Dick's meditations were interrupted by a hammering on the door & Lola's nightingale voice.

"Get off the fucking can, Hamey, I gotta piss."

ANTI-SUMMIT

Tzara: The masses... The Š.V.E.J.K. have undertaken clear actions that the people don't agree w/.

Zamyatin: It's been established that 20% of the population sympathizes w/ us... Tzara: I know. The statistics were prepared in Plague City.

Zamyatin: The situation in Plague City is geared to small groups, both in terms

of legality & illegality.

Tzara: These actions might be justified for Plague City, but not for Berlin.

Zamyatin: Why?

Tzara: In Berlin independent actions were needed to change the situation.
They were necessary preparatory work.

Zamyatin: Why is it any different here?

Tzara: Here there isn't the same type of proletariat as in Berlin.

Zamyatin: The objective process is in conflict... in the offensive the underground will be encircled & isolated. They will be destroyed w/out direct intervention by Š.V.E.J.K. shock units.

Tzara: How, concretely?

Zamyatin: That is the deprivation of rights that we are experiencing. The implementation of the emergency laws combined w/ the persecution of war refugees. An emergency state is being prepared. The offensive in Plague City isn't being seen. The tools of capitalist power apply quite naturally. The media denies any such offensive exists. The policies of the class enemy...

Tzara: I can't quite understand that, the policies of the class enemy?

Zamyatin: There are two lines, the faction of capital, that is, shall we say, within the framework of parliamentary democracy, & that of weak reformism. Both are in direct opposition to the critique of alienation we propose as the only possible solution.

Tzara: However, it isn't necessary to equate social rule & the explicit manifestation of politically directed violence.

Zamyatin: Today we see the possibility of an openly creeping dictatorship.
That is the special situation in Plague City. The competition between US
& Russian capital directly enforces that policy. The Š.V.E.J.K. are the only
force capable of effectively opposing it...

THE LUNAR PHILANTHROPIC SOCIETY

The first announced "moonlift" was due to take off at midnight CET on Sunday night. Noyd read the announcement on his wrist monitor. Someone at the UN had drawn the conclusions no-one else was publicly willing to draw & had taken timely & precipitant action to avert untold disaster. The politicians had been pointing the proverbial finger for weeks, each accusing the others of scaremongering, sensationalism & hatching plots. There'd been minor incidents, pogroms, book burnings, lynchings, football hooliganism. It'd taken the Lunatic Fringe, in the language of the press, to see the bigger picture & take concrete steps to get ordinary folks out of the Plague's reach while there was still time.

The words GLOBAL PANDEMIC scrolled across Noyd's monitor beneath a live video-stream of panic in the streets of London, Bombay, New York. Noyd scratched apprehensively w/ extended middle finger at some sort of growth that'd taken root between his nostrils. There were those who might've called him a fatalist, others an evangelist of the considered view. The greatest illness in the world, he'd concluded long ago, was premature conclusions.

Noyd glanced from his monitor to the documents spread out before him on his attaché. The minutes of the Annual World Congress of Epidemiologists, w/ its ten-point action plan, lay there awaiting his signature. As Acting-Chairman it'd fallen to him to officiate over the publication of the Congress' debate. In

the context, the conclusions that must surely be drawn from it were startling to say the least. There cld be no doubt that the UN & the Lunatic Fringe had vastly misconstrued the real nature of the Situation. He, Noyd, wld set the record straight.

He retrieved a fountain pen from his vest pocket & unscrewed the cap—poised the nib over the blank space above his name & various honorifics, printed in office-standard Times New Roman. A drop of blue ink bubbled from his pen & dripped onto the paper. Noyd looked at it irritably, scratched his nose. Something soft & fleshy came away on the point of his finger. The splotch of blue ink grew, bleeding into the page. Before collapsing onto his attaché, the last thought Noyd had was that there was still time.

THE VANGUARD OF DISASTER

The panic drones circled overhead. Mechanical voices shrieked from the sky. LEAVE THE AREA IMMEDIATELY! STAND STILL! Unexpectedly, one kamakazied into a school bus. Another unleashed hellfire without warning at congregationalists exiting the Chamber of Commerce. Perched on the rooftops, slingshot-wielding kids competed to score a direct hit. The scene was of unrepentant carnage on both sides. A TV crew were vaporised under St Wenceslas' horse in full view of the tourist trade. Riot cops lockstepped up the Square. A rogue drone deleted the entire frontline before the Tactical Response bots could de-programme it. Zoo animals rampaged pell-mell through the arcades. The mercury broke thirty degrees before 9a.m. showing no signs of stopping. J. Ablact Wolfensalt grinned at his newsfeed. "Let chaos reign," the little transistored voice in the back of his head hissed. "Win-win," he muttered aloud, to the bemusement of those journalists nearest at hand. Then in a loud clear voice, for all to hear. "Win-win! WIN-WIN!"

CONTRARY TO RECEIVED WISDOM

World order isn't necessary, it's only inevitable. The question is, what this order means — since clearly we gren't speaking of a liberal democratic or alobal economic délire de grandeur, but "order" in its more worldly ramification of predictive dynamics, of homeostasis & perturbation, of productive entropology. That's to say, contra the economic & technological imperative wherein the language, if not the social impulse, of revolution has been institutionalised in our time. For politics to be an "architectonic science," it isn't sufficient for it to assume a technocentric view orientated by the programmatic & experimental aspirations of industry & "innovation" of the entrepreneurial type, that plagiarises & subordinates social drives. This stems from the false view that technology is a prosthesis of the social domain: the social, on the contrary, is technological to its core, & inversely there's no discourse of technology that's ideologically neutral — in other words, not political. The provocative theses, that globalisation will eliminate conflict between existing "social contracts," isn't a mutation within History but a mutation of History itself.

— THE Š.V.F. I.K.

TO LIVE AT A DISTANCE FROM HISTORY



A TOWN CALLED MISERY

The giant neon swan flashed white against the black sky. Beneath it, the naked city, on its back like Léda, knees apart in pornographic freeze-frame & the expressway busting right up through the middle.

Under the expressway flyover a border gets crossed. The territory slides off the map. In two blocks you're on the other side, but now the map's of a completely other kind of zone.

A train rattles overhead along the viaduct.

Perhaps it's a signal to the watchers to flip the switch. The smell comes first, decay oozing from the river getting into yr skin. Evidence of the river is everywhere, every day the water gets higher. First the heat, then, like clockwork, the rains blow in.

It was never this hot before, there was never this much rain. You can almost choke on the humidity. It cld be Saigon in the monsoon, but it isn't.

The further east from the viaduct you go, the fewer lights there are & the pavements all seem on the verge of subsidance.

Every hundred years or so a flood comes along & washes the whole district away. After the last one they slapped up a couple of dozen factories & tenements for the zombies forced to work in them. But nothing works here anymore.

The factories were all stripped-out after the Revolution, only their shells left. They're all slowly crumbling now under their own weight as the mud percolates its way up through the sediment.

In the middle of all this, someone bored a tunnel up through the side of the valley walling the zone in against the river. The tunnel takes you out of the swamp into Žižkov. They call it the Plughole. When the river breaks, the scum of Kafkaville rises straight up the Plughole.

Even the course of the streets here seems shaped by ancient alluvial bands, forming a contour map of accumulated detritus, rising in ever-steeper

gradations from Husitská to Seifertova to Slavíkova. A monument to upward social mobility. But there're more direct ways of getting there.

MOULE-EN-ROUGE

The Papa Walt avatar gazed blandly at the camera.

"Before cooking mussels," he lisped, in that bland trademark lisp of his, "it's important to clean them well. For this, we need a knife to cut off the 'beards,' or stringy bits that cling to the shells."

He sniffed.

"You should also discard any cracked shells and any open ones that do not close within a minute or two of being tapped."

He gazed down at the bag of mussels that were resting on the chopping board in front of him. The camera followed his gaze. He took one of the shells & tapped it experimentally. The camera zoomed in for a close-up. Followed the motion of the Papa Walt avatar 's hand as it placed the shell under a jet of water. Then pulled back.

"Rinse the mussels under a cold tap to remove any dirt or debris on the shells," he lisped, placing the shell in a colander, "and leave them to drain for a little while."

He smiled & the camera seemed to smile w/ him. Muzak piped faintly in the background. Papa Walt's weekly cookery wiz show was family viewing, & the Papa Walt avatar went to pains to ensure his viewers that no harm came to his ingredients during filming. The curved shells of the mussels themselves suggested incipient smiles. It was smiles all round. The Papa Walt avatar took several dainty sidesteps to the left in a "fastforward" motion that left him standing in front of a "pre-prepared" stove. He gestured magician-like at the tableau that now engaged the camera's rapt attention.

"Place the mussels in a saucepan and add half a glass of water, the bay leaves and a little coarse salt. Put the lid on the pan and leave it to simmer for 8-10 minutes once the water has come to the boil. The mussels should open when they are cooked."

The camera showed smiling mussels reclined in a shallow bath of tastefully arranged garnish, cocktail beach umbrellas included. A few more sidesteps to the left & voilà!

"Next," the Papa Walt avatar lisped, his bland expression becoming blander still, "remove the pan from the heat and throw away any mussels that have not opened, since they may be in bad condition."

The camera panned to a special bio-organic mussel recycling bin, w/ echoes of Sunnydale Retirement Village in its Florida sunset designer colour scheme. Rictis-grinning retiree mussels lolled about making faintly senile gurgling sounds, which the muzak duly transformed into gurgles of contentedness.

"From the remaining mussels," lisped the Papa Walt avatar, deftly manipulating a bit of surgical plastic clearly marked "replica" as the camera readjusted its focus, "remove one half of the shell, leaving only the part that is attached to the mussel meat."

An invisible hand at the editing console swiped the frame back to the chopping board & w/out missing a beat, there's the Papa Walt avatar, plastic bowie knife in hand, lisping over a masterfully arranged mosaic of diced veg.

"Finely chop the onion, tomato and garlic," the Papa Walt avatar lisped. Another swipe back to the stove-top: "Fry the onion and garlic in olive oil in a saucepan or a clay pot and when they are slightly browned," a bit of creative pan & zoom action here, "add the chopped tomato," transforming into an overhead shot, "and cook on a low heat for another 5 minutes."

The camera pulls back & there's blandly grinning the Papa Walt avatar raising a glass of chardonnay & wafting it about beneath his finely tapered proboscis, making appreciative looks w/ his vaguely hypnotic eyes.

"Add a glass of white wine," pouring a bit here, a bit there, and for good measure gulping the remainder off camera we suspect, "the sweet paprika, the finely chopped parsley and two glasses of water," all of which, needless to say, appear by the kind of magic amateur chefs worldwide seek desperately to emulate, sometimes w/ striking & unusual success, thanks to Papa Walt's example, "and stir the ingredients w/ a wooden spoon."

The hand of the Papa Walt avatar stirs the family friendly concoction \mbox{w}/\mbox{a} wooden spoon.

"Add the mussels and spread them around evenly in the sauce then place the lid on the pan." $\,$

This last bit is done so deftly, there's no way for the average viewer to know if they've just unwittingly viewed bits of a snuff film or not.

"Cook for 15 minutes on a low heat, stirring from time to time so that the sauce thickens."

The camera does some wizzie techie stuff & suddenly there's the Papa Walt avatar standing at the head of a happy family dining table, w/ many happy family members sitting around it, gazing raptly up at the Papa Walt avatar or expectantly down at their place mats.

"When this time has elapsed," the Papa Walt avatar waves his hand, "the moules marinières will be ready to serve. If you've cooked them in a clay pot, this'll be ideal for serving them in, too."

The camera zeroes in on the large clay pot sitting in the middle of the table. Ah!

"You can also serve them directly from a saucepan or in a large bowl"
— we see a saucepan & bowl flanking the pot as the camera pulls back once
more — "making sure that the mussels are well dressed in the sauce."

Mmm. Well, kids, I don't know about you, but I'm rushing off to the store to by some frozen mussels right now! The muzak wafts, the family turn to the camera & smile, spoons raised. The Papa Walt avatar gazes blandly, hypnotically. For more Papa Walt family-friendly seafood recipes, visit the website! WWW.PAPA-WALTS-MOULE-EN-ROUGE.COM

THE ADOLESCENCE OF TERROR

Why're yr shoulders stooped was it a long day how many people did you murder this morning do you covet the salaries of the hacks who work for you their wives their children do you read the transcripts of the wiretaps the secret police put on anyone who's still able to sleep at night do you avoid drinking the water knowing it's tainted because you yrself issued the order to make it undrinkable do you floss regularly are yr stools as grey as yr skin did yr mummy exclusively fuck yr daddy but only ever on the occasion of yr conception because you didn't allow him to fuck her ever again?

DECAMERON

The scene that confronted Dr Sidi Bouzid as he returned to his office was enough to make any decent law-abiding citizen puke. Dead rats lay piled up everywhere. Here & there a barely-recognisable human form crawled out of the refuse. The hospital was in chaos, there were corpses in the Immunological Department vestibule.

Bouzid rushed up the stairs. His secretary had barricaded the doors. There was no feasible way this cld go on.

"My god!" his secretary cried. "It's like the Day of the Dead. I didn't think I'd survive."

Bouzid stared morosely at his appointment book.

"Cancel everything," he said. "We've got to get out of here."

He rang the Lazarine. When she answered the phone she sounded hysterical. Bouzid told her to shut up & calm down.

"I've got an idea."

The idea was to collect provisions & lock themselves in the abandoned nuclear bunker under the hill behind the freightyards & wait it out.

"Ten days ought to do it. By then, who knows, everyone else might be dead. Isn't that a jolly fucking thought? There, you ought to feel better already."

Next he called Slavomira & repeated the whole operation.

It was dark by the time he'd called all the women whose company he'd decided wld be essential for surviving the Plague.

"What the hell're you sobbing about?" he shouted back at his secretary as he climbed out his window, leaving her to fend for herself. "Just keep the doors barricaded. It's not the end of the world, you know. Or maybe it is! Who cares?"

SEQUESTRATION OF THE SICK

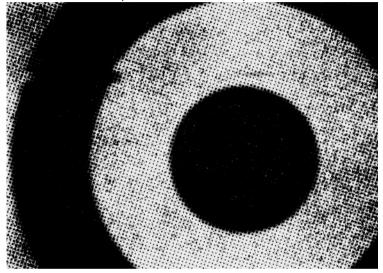
At taxpayers' expense. Q.E.D.

MINIMAL DWELLING (A PARAPHRASE)

sex autism these walls this sky the air closina in plague sore maggots sign of the G.O.D. upon them spirit autism of dog piss on walls porcelain in windows a bull's-eye moneyshot autism of detached lower lip the stitched-up anus of the street the spiritual street auto-clitorectomised the brain of the circumcised wanderer circumcised through the eye the autism infatuated with its autism street wall sky in unison sodomised by their ingrown autism biopsied mammary of eye the eye within the eye the metaphysic anus of the eye's autism the baleful alopping eye

the anus with its teeth bashed in whore of eye spirit cacanated in aerosol of last breath on the side of the abyss made of philosopher's stone these walls this sky





I'M THE KING OF THE CASTLE & Y'RE ALL DIRTY ARSEHOLES

And looky here, the Chairman of the Board of Governors of the Intergalactic Hedgefund Conspiracy, J. Adolf Wolfensohnofabitch — Papa Walt's proxy in the global money-laundering racket — giving the cameras a lickspittle smirk while flashing his personal trademark "I ONLY EAT CHILDREN FOR BREAKFAST, HAR-HAR" t-shirt, bullet-proof replicas on offer from only \$666.00 in yr black of choice, 100% genuine Alabama coonskin.

"I care more about improving conditions for poverty than yr average jerk. Why just the other day I personally signed a deal to make it easier for thousands of third-world children to find gainful employment below the poverty line. I believe in creating opportunities & sharing the benefits of a global economic system that works!"

"Hear-hear!" the Board assented.

A dozen toads w/ party hats tied to their heads sat around the conference table munching on raw snails.

"Ain't that cute," grinned J. Boutros-Boutros Wolfensuck, "we taught 'em how to jump through flaming hoops, too!"

THEM

A line of static descended the image, then something blinked & the image became liquid, swimming in the cornea of a watching eye. The camera pulled back to reveal a face, Kid Katyusha's, faint streaks of blonde catching the neon, high angular cheekbones & a mouth that's mesmerically red. She was standing on a rooftop against a background montaged out of billboard scaffolds, TV antennae, skylights. The scene telescoped out into nothing, a black screen traversed only by a dialogue box metering the flow of aigabytes-per-second.

Zamyatin swivelled the camera on its tripod, sweeping away from the Kid across the rooftops to where helicopter searchlights were tracking the rioters along the east end of the Square. Along w/ the burning tyres & teargas, the searchlights made the horizon into a discothèque. September. The world was supposed to've ended already. Maybe it had & this was just the curtain act, waiting for the death-rattle to sound like a fanfare. Another barrage of rubber bullets. The chanting of the protesters. The boot-stomp of riot cops charging the barricades.

Zamyatin zoomed in on the crisscrossing lights, the drifting silhouettes. Something flared. He refocused the lens. A line of riot cops had formed-up below the stairs of the Natural Sciences Museum, one of their shields was ablaze. They were being pelted w/ cobblestones, street-signs. Another Molotov cocktail flared & fire spread through police ranks. Hazy figures running pell-mell.

The kids setting everything on fire were the same kids who wanted to save the world — from the ones keeping it on life-support just so they cld suck its blood till they found something else to latch onto. The whole shebang had already had a dozen bypasses & transplants & now it was more machine than most machines were. One great big dollar-machine.

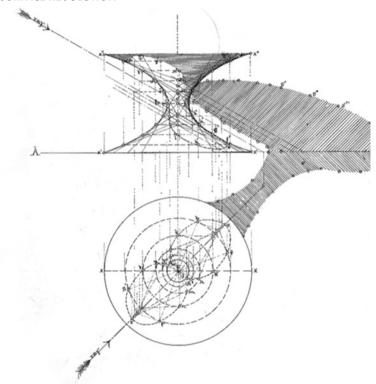
Kid Katyusha observed the scene w/ the kind of disinterest only boredom achieves. The only way a thing that's starved of life dies, she thought, was by suicide or the next Big Bang — anything else was like trying to slaughter a zombie w/ smoke & mirrors. Every now & then some protest kids threw stones at it but the stones just turned to branded confectionery. They thought they were staging a revolution, but they were just extras in an advertisement for the corporate police state. The future was already vesterday.

MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC TERROR

There was light above the buildings, high up in the firewall. A light crisscrossing the sky. Down below, eleven thousand cops huddled behind their shields. Out of the twilight cobblestones & Molotov cocktails rained. It was a Wednesday. The delegates watched the city erupt from the roof of the eighynine-storey Tower, perched over the valley like a medieval keep. Officials made TV faces at the cameras, talking about renewed economic growth, nervously eying the rioters on the Bridge whose frontline was a six-lane barricade against police water canons like the siege army of Dunsinane. Y'd've expected catapults, flaming tar. On all sides, the anarchist war chants echoed. A huge banner unfurled in the firelight: MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC TERROR. Cameras zoomed. Up on the Tower roof the chants sounded like TV static. Delegates milled about w/ stupid confused looks on their faces like extras from The Towering Inferno.

choking on air tainted w/ teargas & burning rubber. Keener eyes scanned for the helicopters that were meant to come & save their necks. The press corps secretly wondered how long before the fires began licking at their feet. As darkness fell, the lights of the ancient city glazed the sky. The keening of giant birds sounded above the combat like a Roman emperor murdering a violin.

SURFACE REVOLUTION



WALT-GEIST

"IT'S FOR US," Papa Walt screamed, "TO BUILD RUINS AMONG THE ASHES!"
Wernher gasped in dismay at the image on the screen. Smoke was
bleeding from Papa Walt's face. Strips of flesh were blistering & dissolving.
But then he saw that what first appeared to be bits of skull-fragment
protruding from the skin were in fact twisted steel struts, like a building's
skeleton piercing its façade. The entire image was a construct, he realised. A
construct on a colossal scale.

But no. Footage from a helicopter TV crew revealed the image to be the work of anarchist subversives projecting Papa Walt's talking head onto the Tower so that, as it burst into flames, Papa too appeared to be burned alive. A ritual sacrifice accomplished by means of grossly distorted pixels.

Wernher shook his head, he didn't know which was the more appalling. He turned to the window & there, dwarfing the drive-in, was the Tower all aglow, writhing against the night. A black hole in its side, cropped out w/flaming glass teeth, shouted soundless obscenities across the city.

WHERE DOES THE IMPETUS FOR LAW-MAKING COME FROM, YOU ASK? It wasn't a flash of lightning from the blue, but a sky full of smoke & ashes.

ORGANISATION VS CONTINGENCY

Ours isn't a reactive stance against the shifting winds of public opinion, but the basis of any true foundation of political "order." Power operates in a dynamic fluidity. Autocracy is, in contrast, the decadence of power, bulwarked by an artificially construed "Call to Order." It is a system maintained in stasis. Its crudest form is the declaration of emergency powers (State of Emergency). Its subtler forms make appeal to a universal "reasonableness" invested in the cult of administrative (technocratic, economic) competencies. Yet the only essentialism in politics rests in the fundamental ambivalence of social "order." The arbitrary scope of all political struggle is encapsulated by the redundancy expressed in such terms as "power struggle" & "political force." There is, in any case, no such thing as a politics of "consensus." Which is to say, of an ideologically neutral politics. Such a fiction is itself the ideology of the technocratic state: the disavowal of ideology at its most ideological.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

WHO DISCOVERED THE PRESENT?

Like everyone else I heard only their idiotic laughter, like the fussy speaking of mice. I felt weightless. I raised the remote control & pressed the button. There was a vivid flash of light.

VOICE OF AMERIKA

"Only an imbecile believes they're a free agent of the Will-to-Power," prated Cosmological Hedge-Fund chairman, Aleph Wolfensuck. "In ill societies such as our own, there's an absurd tension between the imperative to live in truth & the farcical parade of untruths that comprise the everyday spectacle of power. To act is to act w/out illusions!"

The assembled press corps yawned, they knew the real story was outside on the streets, but orders were orders & if Wolfensuck had famous last words he wanted to say to the world, then that's what'd get airplay.

A subcontractor in livery wheeled out the complementary liquor trolley & there was a sudden rush. Voice of Amerika barrelled Radio Free Europe at the line w/ the Washington Post coming in over the top. Johnny Walker spritzed the velour & chenille floor-to-ceiling arrangement. The CBS news

anchor put the boot in making for the bonded gin.

Wolfensuck beamed for the cameras, stuck in front of the live-feed like a crocodile in the limelights. He wondered vaguely how long it'd take for the poison to kick in. It was all part of the big getwaway plan.

"Don't make it happen all at once," he'd instructed the caterers, "it's important to build confidence first. After that, they won't know what hit 'em."

THE DREAM LIFE OF THE SUB-PROLETARIAT

Zamyatin came from a family of sewer workers. His father & arandfather used to do it, so you cld say that he was born & raised w/ the physical & mental constitution needed to spend his days in the bowels of Plague City. The city's sewer system is a hostile place. It smells, there're rats, but somebody has to go down there & keep it all running in the right direction. The upside of the job, is the apportunity to see the world from a unique perspective. The downside is the danger & the exposure to illness, as well as the risk of drowning, or falling in & getting a gut-full of something unpleasant known in the family as "Zamyatin's Baptism." People rarely think about what happens to bodily waste once they flush it down the can. So alienated are they from their own collective bowel functions that they imagine 2.400km of subterranean tunnels magically empty themselves overnight. Zamyatin frequently explained to anyone who'd stay within five feet of him how an army of more than 360 other troglodytes work the system day & night, slaving to ensure no little nasties come back up the pipes, like the return of the proverbial repressed, to upset Joe Average, Zamyatin had often taken pride in this fact, till one day he read an anarchist pamphlet he found floating past in the penumbral aloom & that was when his view of social justice abruptly changed. It was the night before Xmas when he planted his first bomb under the seat of government & posted a video of it online...

10 DAYS OF SOLITUDE

"Before long I saw the first corpse still grimacing w/ suffering. Its face was nearly black. Then I saw two, four, ten, twenty. Then I saw a hundred corpses, not a straight increment, but a curve changing direction constantly."

During their escape through the city, they'd already observed the appearance of white crosses painted on doorways. Smouldering mounds of clothing on street corners. Each member of Bouzid's party had a similar tale of horror to relate. In view of the Situation, they'd all agreed: survival at any price. As it was, of the original number summoned on the phone, only Cuntisha, Slavomira & the Lazarine had made it out alive — a three-tenths return on the initial investment, so to speak. But there was no other choice: during the course of ten days, the gestation period of the disease, they'd barricade themselves behind ten-inch blast doors w/ an air purifier. If necessary they'd live off pickled vegetables & tinned sardines. Bouzid had brought along several dozen crates of Spumanti to even the odds.

The next scene is set in a room in a bunker: DAY 1. Bouzid is struggling with a reel-to-reel projector, threading a strip of Super-8 around he capstans impatiently. A box overflowing with film canisters sits on the floor. The rest of the party are sitting around looking bored. The prospect of home movie

night 60 metres underground holds no especial attraction for them. Only the competing prospect of agonising death or untold terror at the hands of weaponised zombies inclines them to accept their fate. The Spumanti flows, dissolving into rainbows of semi-digested pharmaceutical product. At last the projector stutters to life. Images flicker on the makeshift screen...

Cuntisha is reading a letter written by a character in a novel, "long time between suns may not refuse vision."

It's a scene from Bouzid's work-in-progress, Les Amants d'Albert Camus. Strung end-to-end, the footage ought to keep them occupied till doomsday. Which wldn't be very long in the scheme of things...

All through these screenings the Doctor made extensive notes which wld become the basis of later observations. Other than the strictest quarantine, an effective prevention still seemed impossible at this early stage. According to news reports, the virus' progress had continued unabated. Bouzid, afraid his teeth were falling out, had turned to a diet of sardines & pickled cauliflower. In appearance, the pieces of cauliflower reminded him of brains in jars. He chewed on some thoughtfully while he surveyed their modest encampment.

Their courage had brought them this far, he confided to himself, only their stupidity wld take them any further.

THE BLACK DEBT

At midday, on the first Wednesday of the month, the city stood still for a minute's silence. About halfway through, heavily distorted backvoicing cld be heard through the city's war-era PA system, rustling the leaves of the trees, shaking the windows, knocking the birds off their perches. No-one knew who or what it was. Manifestly the pestilence hadn't led to other events predicted in apocalyptic texts. Was this a sign? Reports from elsewhere had spoken of great earthquakes, stock market collapses, & other physical disturbances, portents, harbingers. There were those who claimed it was the voice of G.O.D. Others called them the "humiliated redeemers," on account of the undiscriminating consequences of the Great Mortality. The Plague had inflicted deep wounds in the social body, w/ no emancipative effect. People continued to suffer, including those who prostrated themselves before the Blessed Sacrament, the Blessed Virgin, the Five Wounds, the Bleeding Heart, the Holy Name. There was no remedy. No prayer. Others at the afflicted & claimed immunity. What good cld come of a voice filled w/ static, blown on the wind?

LOVE, AN INDUSTRIAL ALLEGORY

Work. Sex. Work. Sex.

Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex. Work. Sex.

"LITERATURE IS THE PRESCRIBED SPACE FOR THE AMUSEMENT OF THE CASTRATED"



& THE LAMB LAY DOWN W/ THE LION

At first the demonstrations were peaceful. The kids set up camp in a city park & in the morning marched over the Bridge towards the Tower & lines of riot cops w/ APCs. They came carrying placards waving banners dressed in pink on stilts waving megaphones. Then the hardcore w/ black flags gasmasks balaclavas & boltcutters. Cobblestones smokeflares riotshields Molotov cocktails. They built a barricade. When the cops charged, the anarchists fought back. Battle raged through the night right into the centre of Plague City. Gutted shopfronts upended cars watercanons rubber bullets cops set on fire. In the morning a faint mist of teargas drifted through ancient winding streets making them a postcard scene. Dawn crept stealthily among the rooftops the domes & cupolas like a desperate thief seeking a hideout. Helicopters buzzing like flies circling a carcass. The stink & the endless buzzing.

THE NUCLEAR FAMILY IS THE BEDROCK OF CONSUMER SOCIETY

"Well son, seeing as yr mama was obliged to go in for a colonic, we decided it'd be best all-round to sign up for a family deal. That means you & yr sister too. And the best part is, the Doc said he'd even include Pooch for free."

MERDE D'AUTEUR

Dr Sidi Bouzid, MD, quack evolutionist & perpetrator of sexual deviances, hoaxes, plagiarisms & generally a saboteur of public morals operating under such obviously concocted pseudonyms as Johnny Service, Flash Gordon, Albert Camus, Glass Steagall, Theda Bara, Adam Smith, Julia Kristeva, Mao Zedona, Božena Němsová, James Joyce, Samantha Fox, Julius Fučík, Martha Dodd, Rasputin, the Castel Twins, Pierre Cardin, Susan Sontag. Bobby Womack, Laboria Cuboniks, Salmun Rushdie, Daisy, Phil Spector, Amyl Nitrate, Dodi Fayed, Avital Ronell, Sheikh Mohammad, Holly Golightly, Rich Jamaican, Rrose Sélavy, Buzz Aldrin, Mata Hari, Bobby Seal, Franz Kafka, Jane Fonda, R2D2, Leni Riefenstahl, Thor Garcia, Cosey Fanni Tutti, Carlos the Jackal, Dexter Poindexter, Bia Black Maria, Mark Felt, Rebel Penfold, Franz Ferdinand, Chaka Khan, Hans Lucas, Mélusine, Bernie Madoff, Miss USA, Jesus H. Christ, Annie Sprinkle, Stewart Home, Nancy Drew, Rupert Murdoch, VNS Matrix, Dollar Brand, Marie Skłodowska, Sir Paul McCartney, Abu Ghraib, Jenny von Westphalen, Carl Jung, Ophelia, Sirhan Sirhan, H.D. Imagiste, the Tarnac Nine, Natalia A. Groucho Marx, Maria Bruskina, Emily Davison, Humphrey Bogart, Snoopie, Ulrike Meinhof, John Heartfield, Ethel Rosenberg, François Duvalier, Agripping, the Jackson Five, George Sand. Reverend Charles Lutwidge Dodgson, Ansky, Anna Freud, Joe Blow, Marisol, Babe Ruth, P.D.Q. Bach, Wallis Simpson, Magor, Imelda Marcos, Colonel Sanders, Christine Keeler, André Breton, Wanda von Sacher-Masoch, Gough Whitlam, Rosa Luxemburg, Isidore Ducasse, Penny Anti, Simon Crubellier, the Acheson Sisters, Mehmet Ali Agca, Jonathan Livingston, Mam'selle Nitouche, Bad Schandau, Gavrilo Princip, Emma Destinová, Fleetwood Mac, Karen Eliot, Ford Prefect, Myra Hindley, Bohumil Hrabal, Dolly Buster, Topiary, Venus Obversa, Georges Bataille, Angela Merkel, the Salem Witch, Tristan Tzara, Pauline Réage, Morton Friedman, Amelia Earhart, Alexis de Tocqueville, Sally Bowles, the Gipper, Isak Dineson, Decius Brutus, Andrea Jordain, Sal Volatile, Nancy Reagan, Louis Armand – blatant fiaments all!

PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

It's something unique.
It doesn't really belong.
It's not connected.
It's something different.
It's a little bit of a freak.
It's just floating in limbo.
It's one from the heart.

PUBLIC ORDER

A drunk in a pinstripe suit pulled his cock out & tried to grab hold of Kid Katyusha. W/out blinking she cracked him in the mouth w/ a pair of knuckledusters. Gore flecked w/ bits of broken teeth sprayed on the pavement. She then planted one of her Doc Martens square in the suit's unzipped crotch. Puke sprayed between teeth stubs. He was like the cherry atop someone's just desserts. Not to look a gifthorse in the mouth, Kid Katyusha riffled the suit's wallet, spilling the plastic on the sidewalk, & slipped

a wad of paper currency into the piggybank down the front of her corset. "Looks like the market just crashed, dickhead." She left him sitting pretty that way, groping in a pool of muck for his gold fillings — cld still hear the slob whimpering at the end of the block. At least he wldn't be able to say he didn't get his money's worth.

THE STREETS TO BE SWEPT CLEAN

Storm clouds shaped eastward over the flyover. The chanting of the protest kids died out under the rumble of dry thunder. Down at street-level, shadows spidered between sidewalk cracks. Steam rose out of the drains, the stink of ozone & hot neon. Then out of nowhere another rubber-bullet barrage. Bootstomp of riot cops charging the barricades. Zamyatin zoomed-in. Cops being pelted w/ cobblestones, street-signs. Another Molotov flared. Hazy figures running pell-mell. The scene repeated itself.

"AN ARGUMENT CAN'T BE PROVED BY QUOTATIONS"

(Rupert Murdoch)

RHETORICAL CHAOS

Crisis has always existed as an ideological foil, the "fear at the gates." This in opposition to the real complexity of social relations. Its aim has always been to dissemble the intent of a politics that aspires to bring a "science" of normalisation; the reduction of human interactions to a schema. These geometries of delirium exist solely to discipline the social body, henceforth subservient to the political order. This "common good" is nothing if not opportunistic of a grasping sadism tending to a collective masochistic impulse. The truth is that society is always prepared to suffer at the hands of a pragmatic idealism. Such "organic" crises, which in fact are nothing of the kind, always revert to the form of a problem to be solved, for which the technocracy is uniquely qualified. Politically "rationalised," crisis undergoes a miracle of transformation, becoming an opportunity for progress. We ignore the fact that the formulation of the problem is ideologically predetermined at our peril. It is precisely the appeal to science, models, hypotheses, contending viewpoints & experimental methods, that conceals a coercive attitude towards the "scientific" as such — which at the moment it contradicts the operations of power is denounced as "pseudo-science."

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

ONE INJECTION WAS ALL IT'D TAKE TO NEGATE THE EFFECTS, BUT AT WHAT COST TO THEIR SANITY?

In every direction away from the crisis points, the city was dead, evacuated in the middle of the night, Plague-panic. Word had travelled. At first they didn't know what caused it. Then the symptoms started to be recognised. Gestation periods. Trajectories of contamination. Bouzid elected to stay put & led his movable harem down into a disused bunker, a Cold War relic, bored

under Babelsberg Hill, behind Sámo's freightyards. It was the hill where oneeyed Žižka sat astride his horse guarding the homeland. The plan was to wait it out, aided by every kind of debauchery. Across the city, the captains of industry had arrived at a similar idea. Barricaded in the Tower complex. the congress of the IMF & World Bank — the avant-garde of corporate areed — went into emergency session, led by the ruthlessly charismatic J. Adolf Wolfensbayne. The principle order of business was to sequester the city's supply of truth serum. The first official mention of the Plague only appeared in the evening edition of Právo. Immediately, out on the streets, protests formed. Riot cops fought running battles w/ weaponised peaceniks & looting squat kids. Within days, corpses choked the river — the only reliable disposal system. Wolfensbayne sat in his requisitioned suite mainlining serum. The Plague, he'd decided, was just as much an artefact of his paranoia as its cause. He was paranoid that the world wld end before he'd figured out a way to maximise his returns. He prayed the riot cops widn't abandon their posts & leave him at the mercy of the Scum. He prayed to Papa Walt in his cryogenic cocoon. He prayed to Saint Rita, patron of the impossible. No. he'd never forgive those who'd engineered the degradation of avarice into desire & desire into a social illness. Never.

LES AMANTS D'ALBERT CAMUS

Scene: The enemy at the gates — they're under siege. The hour's indeterminate.

We're looking down from a spiral staircase. A subterranean bunker. Vaulted concrete draped in velour. Mood, structure & appearance. Death is the paradox of an absence of contradiction. The Lazarine is heard in Dr Bouzid's sanctum sanctorum: she's delirious, re-enacting her struggle w/ Papa Walt. The fable of life in its bureaucratic miasma. At least a week has passed since their descent into the underworld. So far, a verdict hasn't been reached. The inmates are alternately morose & frantic, having lost all sense of time. If this is life, what reason is there to live? There's an incantation, punctuated by responses from the Doctor.

"Existence," he says, "is an exercise in torment & condemnation. Or nothing at all."

Someone is heard praying. It's Slavomira, in a fit of night sickness, her eyes like wet plastic.

"How am I supposed to know if I'm real?"

She's four-foot-ten-inches long black hair green eyes w/ cherry hemangiomas. She has a silver bell attached to her cunt. The drudgery of genius.

"Let it ring," she moaned, in throws of melancholy.

Bouzid has set himself the task of countering, by all available means, the Plague's neurotelepathic weapons. Was there an elephant in the room?

"Are you fucking nuts?"

Slavomira screamed when he tried to stuff his stethoscope into her mouth. He'd grown desperate for air, for the respiring humus of the world above, the heat dialling off traffic-congested streets, the sap of the fir trees. He was as confidence-inspiring as a prick w/ gonorrhoea. Slavormira grabbed him by his bolo tie.

"A nihilist," she screamed into his face, "is someone who doesn't take anything for granted!"

Bouzid licked the spit from around his mouth.

"It's necessary," he grinned, "to seek the poet, not the patient, behind the words."

"I'm thirty-three & never been fucked," she replied simply.

"Have you considered turning to G.O.D.?"

Cuntisha laughed tinnily from the armchair in which she'd taken refuge w/ another paperback. A pair of cats glared from behind an overturned rubbish bin. The view from the periscope showed a Cadaver Squad roaming the Babelsberg hillside like a gang of ephebic youths sucking canned air. They were carrying yellow plastic bin-bags, collecting DNA samples. Faces were like a slithering perplexity. No doubt they were operating a racket in death artefacts.

"A fatal coincidence," Cuntisha read aloud, "can often be so sinister & fantastic in character that one is tempted to draw apparently logical but actually unfounded conclusions."

Having avoided the Great Plague of 1348, it was only a matter of time before destiny required they pay their due. The Lazarine called for the Doctor: she'd recovered. Their exchange about her illness develops into an aria.

INFLATABLE ALMA MAHLER DOLL

The helicopter veered & lost control before ploughing into the side of the Tower. J. Admass Wolfenschtick ogled it from up above on the rooftop, flanked by panicking aids in soot-flecked pinstripe.

"Well there goes Plan A," he drawled, flicking a cigar butt into the wind. "I say we make a run for it in the limo."

They hit the elevators at a mad rush. The garage was cram-packed w/delegates trying to negotiate a way out past the riot squad. Most of them only made it as far as the exit ramp before they took a barrier through the windscreen & lucky if they made it back w/ their scalps still on. The punks outside'd wrecked virtually everything equipped w/ wheels.

Wolfenschtick steered his crew to the VIP parking. A black armour-plated Maybach was taking up three slots.

"If it moves, run it into the ground!" he shouted at the driver.

The thing had horsepower like a thirty-tonne earthmover. W/ all the panache of a brontosaurus they slalomed up the ramp. Molotovs flared. They swung right, the Tower loomed infernal, cobblestones & bottles rained. Then left, a makeshift barricade, a face plastered in expressive disbelief against the windscreen before sluicing overboard. A strip of unsullied tarmac opened up. The V12 purred. Wolfenschtick stretched back in his captain's chair.

"Piss easy!"

The aids smirked, reached simultaneously for the minibar. Next turn, the Maybach took out a shop corner, reared up onto the opposite sidewalk.

"HALT!" Wolfenschtick screamed.

The sign over the demolished window display read SHAKEY DICK'S. Wolfenschtick was out of the limo in a flash, hefting himself across the street. In no time he was back again w/a pink cellophane box under his arm, grunting for breath. He slapped the box down on his knees. INFLATABLE

ALMA MAHLER DOLL, UNIVERSAL SIZE, W/LIFELIKE RUBBER SPHINCTER.

"Promised Elaine I'd pick one up as a prezzie. She's been buggin' me about it since whenever. Says she always wanted to try it w/a woman, but the idea of someone she knows makes her embarrassed & w/a whore you never know what diseases they got, har-har."

The aids smirked some more, sucked their drinks. Wolfenschtick cldn't remember either of their names. So when their heads evaporated in the blast, it struck him as kinda abstract, like automated trading. All he was aware of after that was crawling through smoke & curling up under a stormwater grate while voices swirled overhead. He clutched at the box, sobbing his wife's name, but the box cldn't hear him.

THE LIFE OF THE MIND

A real intellectual shits like a dog, face to the wind.

>YOU AREN'T HERE<

The tiny squares he cld see gone black inside Papa Walt's shiteating grin had to add up to something. IF IT SOUNDS REASONABLE, the large print said, WHY NOT DOUBLE IT? Buzik was staring at the billboard mounted on the side of the flyover. It fizzled & popped above the intersection, in the overspill from the dual carriageway coming down in almost continuous sheets. Pixels flared. There must've been millions of them. A person wld have to stand way back, Buzik flgured, like taking in a view of the Empire State, to get any sense from it. To see Papa Walt instead of the pixel squares, the way it looked streetside. But even close up you cld see the old cunt was the type who'd corrupt & deprave. This was just how they softsoaped you. Got you wondering about optics instead of where the guy's gonna put his hand once the theatre lights dimmed. Here & there the pixels had gotten de-synced for good. Black squares glitching Papa Walt's ubiquitous visage. At least Buzik cld take credit for those, perched on the rooftiles playing sniper w/ his rapid-reload BB gun.

THE EVER-EXPANDING IMAGOSPHERE

(Only light escapes.)

WE REGRET TO ADVISE OF AN UNSCHEDULED INTERRUPTION TO OUR REGULAR PROGRAMMING*

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THE ETERNAL MAÑANA OF THE INFINITE AD-BREAK

Damaging insulation on any electrical equipment creates radio interference in the immediate area, particularly on large generators, neon signs, fluorescent lighting, X-ray machines & power lines. If resistance fighters succeed in damaging insulation on high tension lines near an enemy installation, they will make radio communications difficult & perhaps impossible during long periods.

FALSE CHOICES

Schizophrenia: is it a solution?

HOW TO MAKE A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL

- 1. Gasoline
- 2. Oil
- 3. Cloth or raa
- 4. Glass bottle
- 5. Bottle stopper or cork

Half-fill bottle w/2/3 gasoline & 1/3 oil.

Soak cloth or rag w/ gasoline & place in mouth of bottle.

Fit cork tightly.

Set rag alight & throw.

TO LIVE OR TELL, THAT'S THE QUESTION

"The Plague may not be a dinner party," Bouzid said, stuffing a tinned sardine in his mouth, crunching noisily. "But that's no reason to deprive ourselves unnecessarily."

"What about the starving children?" Cuntisha pouted.

"I can't help the starving children," he said chewing, "can I?"

"Well you cld make them happy at least."

"This fish," Bouzid grunted, "was a happy fish. It died believing it'd go to a better place."

Cuntisha, in a marabou feather boa, clapped sardonically.

"Bravo. When they feed you to the fishes, you'll feel it will've been just."

"Justice, my dear," Bouzid politely belched, "is an after-dinner mint."

"For that, I suppose, we should be thankful to G.O.D., the Virgin Mary, & the Übermensch."

"My dear, the only thing worse than explaining a joke, is trying to disown it." Cuntisha smirked.

"Is that so? Here," she kicked a tin of sardines that'd been lying on the floor, "why not really go to town?"

The tin spun across the imitation parquet & came to a rest against

Bouzid's chair. Bouzid tossed the tin he'd just finished over his shoulder & reached to pick up the new one.

"Don't mind if I do," he said, wiping boiled fishscale from his lip.

The top of the tin peeled back in a single fluid motion.

"Ah," Bouzid's eyes lit up, "as waves upon a rubbled shore, so do the masses hasten to their end, each changing place w/ those that went before."

THE ANTIPOLITICS OF EVERYDAY LIFE

"Alienation is the 'realisation' of the individual as locus of a 'progressive' social myth."

ROMANTICISM

An open field of reeds & long grass. On one side of the field, a straight dirt road recedes towards the horizon like a double perspective line. On the far side of the road, a stand of poplars interrupts the uniform flatness of the scene. Perhaps, on the other side of the field, a raised dyke serves a parallel function. The overall impression is of a landscape by an undistinguished student of Vermeer. The sky is blue, slightly turquoise, w/ a scattering of cloud.

As the camera advances across the field, it becomes aware that the field is not flat after all. Instead it is traversed by a network of irrigation ditches & canals. The ditches are shallow, dug from a rough yellow clay, hardened by the sun. There is no water. In the middle of the field, dividing it horizontally, is a low embankment. A narrow dirt track runs along the top of it between the dyke & the dirt road. It's towards this embankment that the camera appears to be moving, & as the camera moves you become aware of a voice, speaking to you. At least it seems to be speaking to you, since there's nothing else to whom it cld be speaking. It's a slow, measured voice. Familiar. Ordinary. It's the kind of voice you cld've heard before, anywhere. The kind of voice that doesn't belong to anyone. The kind of voice you encounter in dreams.

"There're many types of sickness in the world," it says. "There're the ordinary everyday types of sickness, the life-threatening types of sickness, the species-threatening types of sickness. There're the spiritual & physical types of sickness. And there're the real & imaginary types of sickness. Each of us, in one way or another, is an expression of a type of sickness."

As the camera approaches the embankment the voice breaks off. The camera suddenly rises into the air, as though all along it'd been hovering, floating, like a disembodied eye. The camera's floating & looking down at what's on the other side of the embankment. And what it sees is a dried-up canal. On the dusty canal-bed, hundreds of people lie motionless, their bodies entangled. It looks like a mass grave. The camera freezes, only the dust moves, a loose strand of hair, a scrap of clothing. Then the camera begins to zoom in, to hunt its prey. A movement. A pulse. The camera comes to rest in close focus on a face. A pair of eyes. The eyes open in a sudden, convulsive movement, staring back at the camera. And then the voice returns, as though completing a thought that'd been left hanging only a moment before.

"Which type of sickness," it says, "are you?"

EAT PAPA WALT

#Patriphagy as applied #Oedipalism?

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

M-I-C...

K-E-Y...

J-U-I-C-E!

Mickey juice!

Donald sucks!

Mickey juice!

Donald sucks!

He sucks & sucks & sucks & sucks! (Hey hey!)

Mickey juice!

Donald sucks!

Mickey juice!

Donald sucks!

He sucks so hard he blows himself to fuck! (Ho ho!)

LIFE ISN'T A GAME

Buzik hit the button on the console & the back-&-forth roving hand on the vid screen pulled the trigger BLAM! & missed.

The man's silhouette weaved.

BLAM! again.

BLAM! BLAM! BLAM!

The silhouette bolted across the Metro vestibule.

Buzik swore under his breath, the target was getting away.

Left-to-right, right-to-left, the hand roved.

Buzik slapped the firing button, the silhouette weaved.

Buzik wished he had a coin to insert to make the game work properly.

He kicked the vid stand disconsolately & turned away.

The hand on the screen continued to rove side-to-side.

Across the Metro vestibule Buzik saw a man running towards the escalators. The man looked vaguely familiar.

Then something blasted the air nearby.

The man reached the escalator & dived onto the median headfirst, disappearing from view.

A volley of gunfire filled the stairhead w/ exploding rubber & steel.

The vestibule began to swirl w/ smoke.

Buzik gasped.

Behind him the hand on the vid screen roved monotonously back-&-forth. Buzik's fingers twitched.

He felt an overwhelming urge to run, which he nevertheless did everything within his power to resist.

THE WORM THAT TURNED

Wernher had, were he to admit it to himself, long ago mutely ceased to feel: a cog in the machine he himself had constructed. He gazed around his office.

Ordinarily its walls resembled yellow sandpaper, but in the gloom they were incinerator-grey. The sea of carpet, a gross self-justification, lost itself in stygian darkness. The glass wall, a blackened page, now that the city lights had been shut off.

If Wernher turned his head, the dim glow of street fires would've appeared to grow in effective contrast the closer they approached the river. And on the far side, the Tower, faintly luminescent now against a perimeter of hazard lights. Minus its façades, its was barely an armature propped against the sky, awaiting nothing more substantial than a gust of vehemence to cause it to buckle-in on itself at last. Like the fragility of all evidence. In an hour or so, & if it was still standing, dawn wld smother it in miasma.

"Wernher," the intercom gabbled, "you out there?"

A grey shape formed on the monitor. Eyes & a mouth. Tired beyond belief, Wernher avoided looking at them. Instead he jockeyed the controls on his wheelchair & manoeuvred towards the door.

"Wernher? Answer me you Kraut sumbitch!"

The chair's motor strained against the pile. The carpet, like everything else in the office, had the appearance of grey sand. Except that in the dark it had the appearance of nothing. The chair drifted across it most laboriously.

"WERNHER!" Papa Walt screamed.

Almost at the door, Wernher half-swung the chair around. He withdrew a pearl-handled Luger from inside his jacket & braced his left elbow fussily against the chair's padding. Though he was out of practice, he managed at least one direct hit on the intercom — the strays punched holes in the window. White nuggets of starlight constellated the glass. Wind buffeted. There was a faint but high whistling sound, like an oriental flute.

INTERIOR: DANCING IN THE FALLOUT SHELTER

Bouzid, wearing a gasmask, dances a lesghinka in which he takes all the parts. The women, also in gasmasks, stand sit lie around in various stages of undress watching.

To be exact, the gasmasks are grey rubber w/ glass circles for eyes & look like the snouts of ghastly rats.

THE ARTIST TODAY IS UNEQUAL TO A CHILD'S VISION

"A true revolution leaves only ruins in its wake, but the only true revolution is the Plaque."

NOIR CITY

Storm clouds shape eastward over the rooftops echoing the distant rumble of the stormheads as a faint drizzle makes its dénouement.

Night fills in the gaps.

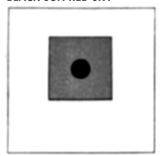
Down on the street, thin men spider between sidewalk cracks. Steam rises out of the drains, the stink of ozone & hot neon. An upsidedown Golemgrad full of holes stares out at you from craters of half-melted tarmac.

You catch the lights at the right angle & the reflections have no end, like lit-up funfair arcades selling a one-way ride down into the depths.

WE

"All metaphors," Zamyatin said, "become physical gestures, performed by clowns. For example, despair. Man isn't free. This fact is daily made obvious to him. He is given a choice: to resist or be entertained. Our hero is driven by a belief in historical necessity. He believes it's his task to liberate his fellow men from the prison of their illusions. Revolution at all costs! This, too, entertains them. In despair, he ties stones to his feet & jumps into the river from Charles Bridge. He only succeeds in breaking his legs. The clowns parody the hero's attempt to commit suicide by somersaulting into a bucket of water."

BLACK SUN RED SKY





SEEKERS AFTER THE NEW MYTH

Just another saga of lost innocence, the Fall, promises of redemption held just out of view, the whole thing on fastforward, but there was no end to it, as soon as one protagonist timed-out his & her doppelgängers were right there ready to take it all from the top.

THE SELL-BY-DATE'S PAST ITS SELL-BY DATE

An ideology doesn't prove or contradict the existence of a hydrogen atom, but it does create the real existence of an atomic or hydrogen bomb. The "realist" or "pragmatic" view is thus one that operates on the understanding that all viewpoints are ideologically premised. That the existence of viewpoints is in fact synonymous w/ ideology. A nuclear warhead is a viewpoint. The "realist" view of ideology operates on the premise that in order to create the real existence of a future, the ideological character of a given viewpoint must be capable of superseding itself. But that it must be able to do so w/out contradicting the viability of the future thus constituted. It is said of the nation state that "self-supersession" is the price of survival in today's "community of nations." But the nation state isn't a product of self-supersession & doesn't possess this evolutionary characteristic. The nation state, like all concrete manifestations of power, is unbound by "reasoned necessity," other than its own. Yet the myth of voluntarism stands in immediate relation to the violence by which the "rational" nation state is born, & by

which it must past away. Like the Greek polis, the modern nation state has no conception of itself that isn't the product of ideological hegemony. The future "state" will not be the outcome of reasoned self-supersession, but of disproportionate & unforeseen evolutionary forces.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

IN BED W/ PAPA WALT

The mission of Papa Walt Entertainment Inc™ is to be one of the world's leading manufacturers & distributors of legal pornography & mass propaganda. Using our portfolio of brands to dissimulate the monopolistic, centrally-planned & systematic nature of "content delivery," we seek to consolidate our present market-saturation & to define the future scope & direction of individual & social habits. We will continue to develop the most ubiquitous, hypnotic & profitable entertainment experiences on the planet... & beyond. Our leadership team's vision & strategic direction reflects the same commitment to excellence, creativity & innovation that stands behind many of the world's most influential & powerful brands, utilising advanced prototype technology, analytics & consumer programming to further control all areas of daily life. ⑤

AMOQ

He'd been an upstanding member of society all those years. Till finally the Plague got the better of him & he tore a hole in his shirtfront & started pulling his guts out to see what his insides looked like. "Which bit's the spleen?" he raved. "I wanna see the goddamn spleen!"

SHAKEY DICK'S MIDGET LESBIAN PEEPSHOW

"We are an equal opportunity employer."

THE MAN W/ THE MOVIE CAMERA

Zamyatin's preferred medium was the fragment, arranged alongside or superimposed upon other fragments, w/ a flagrant disregard for the demands of either naturalism or anti-naturalism. His critics were unable to agree whether or not these "vignettes of artificial life," as one particularly astute reviewer put it, constituted a new cinema or an abolition of the old cinema, or neither. Zamyatin himself maintained a self-confessed ambivalence. verging upon hostility, to the competing orthodoxies of commercialisation & the socalled arthouse scene. "A plague on both yr houses," he'd said, in an unattested, off-camera interview. And while that fountainhead of untutored curiosity & guile from which the earliest experiments & forays into filmmaking had proceeded, long ago, remained a continuing source of inspiration, Zamyatin adamantly denounced any suggestion that its purity cld be regained by simply closing one's eyes to history. The reverse was also untrue. Thus Zamyatin's separation from the heavy-handed narrative of that theatre of insurrection being staged upon the city's streets. His ambivalence was a kind of necessity: true extremes met only according to a chance montage of events. At every step, Zamyatin saw himself not as a director, but as a vehicle, the camera's mobile extension by which it transposed itself in time & space as if by a mobile fixity of purpose. That purpose being not to analyse, but to apprehend. But it was an ambiguous apprehension, which Zamyatin's critics seized upon so as to characterise his "goulash of fragments" as combining all the worst excesses of paramodernist precognitivism. A pseudo-poetry that refuses life only in order to embellish it w/ pure antimatter. A cinema that denounces itself merely to foist itself, more blatantly, more viciously, upon a defenceless cinema-going public. At best a form of molestation by sleight-of-hand, at worst an act of terrorism.

CATEGORY RESPONSE

| in the epitaph to | manner to contest need | the central task is |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| war pronouncement | limits to fidelity to censorshi | |
| war enters | expression | capital of silence |
| ontology | ejaculation | further investigations |
| operations directive | the central task is | their ecumenical |
| dispensing w/ | in its scope & excess | laws poems technologies |
| w/out the present | is collective | threat of |
| impetus | caustic | love of |
| economic forces | corporate | direction & control |
| war within | cycle of influence | in which the body |
| war you can | end-user-subjugate | in which the provided |
| dehistoric phase | depict | created enforced emptied |
| the central task is | sensitive increments | to be an offering |
| but the world | music by informing threat | to be etcetera |
| but the war | mucous membrane | etcetera |
| define correlation | takes nourishment | etc |

THE MAN W/ THE BIONIC ARSEHOLE

In the end they succeeded in working rat poison into Papa Walt's haemorrhoid cream. But that only seemed to make him stronger. More stiff-jawed. More of a ramrod sonofabitch.

THE CULT OF OPTIMISM

There used to be a pawnshop on Kaprová Street, within view of the Old Town Mosque, stacked floor to ceiling w/ shelves cluttered w/ brains in jars. They'd all been pickled in formalin, good as new. It was the place where all the local

poets & intellectuals came to put themselves in hock for whatever they cld get. Mostly they never came back, relieved it cld be over & done so painlessly.

PREPAREDNESS IS EVERYTHING

- When does it start?
- Just keep watching the screen. When you see a light, press the button. Don't move yr eyes.
- What if I don't see anything?
- Don't worry, just be ready. And kid?
- Yeah?
- Good luck.

DOOR TO NOWHERE

He opened it & went inside.

THE PLAGUE HOUSE

If Žižkov was a sink, the Plague House was the bit that kept it bolted to the drain. The inside of the club was painted nail-varnish red. There was a catwalk w/a dancing pole & mirrors on all the walls. Booths w/red leatherette sofas ran down one side & halfway back along the other. 4a.m. most of the whores were asleep on the sofas, the ones who weren't were staring at the walls, some were drinking. A couple of blondes were busy grinding their hips into each other now that there was no-one but two or three stone-eyed johns hoisting their wallets into their pants for the taxi ride to wherever. The girl behind the bar was stacking glasses.

Kid Katyusha led Five-Crimes through a doorway hung w/ mirrored celluloid down a moth-eaten hallway. He almost choked on the aerosol.

"Whadya do w/ the ones who suffocate to death?" he said.

Their secret meeting room was through a closet under the back staircase. Zamyatin was already waiting for them. His face looked like an advance case of phylloexera. There was a camera in an open shoulder bag lying on the floor beside a metal desk. The place uncomfortably resembled a cop surveillance nest, 40 watts of naked lightbulb hanging from a wire. 5C half-expected a couple of two-way mirrors & desolate scenes of cleaning ladies sanitising dead-aired rooms. Kid Katyusha pulled the door closed behind her.

"Conditions are rapidly deteriorating," Zamyatin wheezed the moment the lock clicked. "An opportunity like this mightn't ever come again. We need to act. If not now... when?"

EXCHANGE VALUE

Labour sold in (a) factory, or (b) brothel?

THE BABELSBERG CREW

"Well we waited 40 years underground for the funeral of Big Brother & we'll wait another 40 if necessary for the funeral of Papa Walt."

THE PLAGUE COLONISES THEIR UNCONSCIOUS

The orange disc flashes on off on off. A sodden round of orange in blacked-out Mondrian cross-hatching, the black shimmers, sprays apart in a blur of wheels. From the flyover this appears proverbial. A hit & run on a dead street at a dead intersection. The rain machine's going to keep the waterworks on all night. They'll go on killing this scene as long as it takes to get a printable take. Then someone'll throw an umbrella over it all so the robots can get back to business. They've got their biz just like you, acting otherwise. I write acting, not something else. Is such an etymology to be trusted?

THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS A DIVIDED MIND

Yr alter-ego said.

BREAKFAST AT MIDNIGHT

I find a stool at the corner of the bar while the band wraps up the set. Under a lone red stagelight, a black diva in a white satin dress w/ the seams almost gone is making faces at a microphone. W/out asking, the barman puts a drink in front of me. It doesn't taste like anything, which is more than you'd expect.

The singer in the white dress is telling the microphone a story about a Bourbon Street bluesman called Rick D'Opera. It's a lead-in. The next song's about him, she calls it *Déjeuner à Minuit*, which's French apparently, but midnight was long ago sweetheart.

She starts in slow & melancholy & the empty dance floor looks just like what it is. And the losers at the bar look just like what they are. Then the saxophone breaks in like it's the barman's cue to pour another round of drinks. None of them's in a rush to leave. The rent on a stool in this place isn't much. On a Sunday night, they're lucky to give the tickets away. The place used to be a strip-club that fell on lean times after the Big Flood. The kind of place you'd come to drown.

The singer leans into the microphone for all it's worth, which isn't much, trying to find a note to end on. She has the glassy stare of a graveyard shift-worker, counting the days till closing time. The sax edges up beside her, fingers the valves, making ghost music while the rest of the band drifts off into the weather.

When the lights come up you can still see the tidemarks on the walls.

PLAGUE VICTIMS OF YORE

They were seated around the table, in the dark.

"Under favourable conditions," Cuntisha said, "the dead sometimes manifest." $\,$

Suddenly the phone rang.

"Damn crank callers again!" the Doctor said, thrusting the receiver down in distaste.

The others watched him apprehensively. You cld almost see the contamination spreading out of the phone & up his arm.

WAR IS POLITICAL ONTOLOGY

Post-War European politics has increasingly assumed the form of an administration of an economic & cultural plan underwritten by wartime debt. war-quilt, the decline of colonialism, & the triumph of the corporate mercantile class — by which the "politics of nations" has been effectively superseded. The constitution of this New Social Order was written in the courtrooms at Nuremberg & promulgated by the "largest import-export agency the world has ever known" (called the Marshall Plan & later the World Bank & International Monetary Fund). The rationalism of "collective security" & "world peace," under the juridical cloak of "International Law," deflects from the true revolutionary character of this new order. An Order which has consolidated itself beyond the reach of the socalled "political sphere." An Order that may be compared to an Artificial Intelligence that in fact controls the Body Politic, A "rational" mercantile totalitarianism. A vast "culture-killina" machinemind in the service of its own raison d'être. Its barely concealed violence is the proverbial volcano upon which the "community of nations" dances into the twiliaht. It has assumed the force of an evolutionary fait accompli. In its shadow, the appeal to reasoned critique is the height of absurdity.

— THE Š.V.F. I.K.

THE MEN & WOMEN WHO SEE ANGELS ON EARTH

There was a chance back there that you weren't as stupid as you look, kid, but it was always a slim one.

G.O.D. MAKES A SPECTACLE

The sky pisses down. Belespon Joe mouths it, a mouth hungering for certainty. "I've been in this room in this city for so long I can't see any more. It's like suffocating in bile."

Leaning back, further out the window, like a spring too tightly wound. Something as big as the Empire State Building up there in slow dissolve.

A huge black gaping spewing rupture in a black page. The only way to survive it wld be a politics involving every level of pain. If he leant back any further he'd recoil or fall.

There was always this either/or. The more he shot in his vein the less it mattered. Being in more than one place at any given time wasn't the problem, the trick was to be in the same place at the same time.

You want the meaning of everything handed up to you? Jesus wasn't a door-to-door salesman? Well hallelujah! Open yer fuckin' mind for once & get the truth.

"Look," someone points up at him from the street, "it's raining."

THE TIME OF REVOLUTION

Does the Past think about the Future as much as the Future thinks about the Past?

BRIGHT IDEA

To use a lightbulb as an incendiary device, drill a small hole near the base

of a common lightbulb w/out damaging the filament. Using a syringe, inject gasoline into the lightbulb & seal the hole w/ epoxy. Screw the lightbulb in place at the target location, making sure that the light-switch is in the off position. An explosive fire will ignite when the light is switched on.

WHO TREATS THE SCRIPT DOCTOR?

Now the problem w/ words is there's always people attached, who'll get away w/ anything they can. Get the word in the viewfinder & shoot. Like you cld see a bullet but you cldn't see that. Except there's no frames in this film, to slow down or speed up, no film either for that matter, the picture has to face its existential dilemma all alone. Shadows tying-up in the shadows. The fix is in, kid, we know what our orders are. First the blindfold, then the hammer being cocked. The steel mouth against the nape. The telegraph click down the empty chamber spelling no reprieve. Shit, you wanted Dostoevsky? A cateyed moon stares through the rain. It's long after midnight, but it isn't dawn yet. The streetlight flashes orange. The neon swan turns against the sky.

HOW TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE (IS NO SECRET)

Do you have a favourite cream puff recipe you'd like to share?

ACTUALITY OF LINGUISTIC OR PHYSICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Nobody had a past anymore that cldn't fit into 140 characters. Other people's lives are less crowded. Like ships passing in a void.

AUTODIDACTICISM

The Doctor was digging into it w/ a scalpel, in short, sharp, uncontrolled jabs. He'd levered it out of its socket w/ his thumb, & was busy making a mess of it on the dissection table. Bits of eyeball anatomy were distributed like a complex Rorschach around the locus of the Doctor's frenzied activities.

"What're you doing?"

Nurse Slavomira struggled to keep the hysterical edge from invading her voice. The Doctor stopped operating & grinned up at her like a brainshocked Cyclops.

"There's something in my eye, I'm trying to get it out!"

CHARITY BEGINS AT HOME

About a mile away, the riots were in full swing. Stock footage of smashed storefronts Molotov cocktails riot cops etc. Carnage on the steps of the Natural Sciences Museum. Choppers circling overhead. They'd been there since the Big Money circus wheeled into town & the antiglobalisation punks set up their barricades around the Palais-de-fucking-Culture, only now there were more of them, more frenzied, but just as useless up there. You'd've expected half of Plague City to be in lockdown by now, but it wasn't like that at all. They'd been bussing in cops from every half-arsed berg in the country for the best part of a week & they were still outnumbered. If the punks'd had

the brains to start a revolution instead of just kicking in windows, they'd've had the keys to the Castle before morning. Which was why Five-Crimes told the gang tonight was the night.

5C had punched exactly that many clocks doing juvenile time for petty larceny, break&enter, grievous bodily, armed robbery & car-jacking. All before the Commies got rissoled & the major part of the nation's prison population slipped between the cracks of a general amnesty. He'd stayed between the cracks ever since. Even to look at him you weren't really sure he was there — he dressed the way you'd imagine they dress dead accountants at the mortuary. Grey, he said, always saves on overheads.

At that moment, 5C was sitting in the passenger seat of an orange Ford Transit that Kid Katyusha had boosted from the Public Works compound by the freightyards. They were idling at an intersection, waiting for the lights to change. From the north side of the yards, you cld hear tear gas grenades & rubber bullets being fired above the drone of the choppers. Apart from that, it cld've been any other 2:00a.m. 5C sat there w/ a clipboard resting on his knees while Kid Katyusha tapped on the steering wheel w/ one hand & ashed a cigarette out the window w/ the other. Between them, Zamyatin hugged his camera sickly, mumbling into the lens. Sweat glistened on his face. He looked like a corpse in 40° heat.

The lights changed & they swung down past the neon swan away from the elevated expressway in the direction of the river, then south along the embankment all the way to the valley. You cld see the helicopter searchlights crisscrossing the Bridge. The glow of burning tyres. Random flares exploding in the night.

By contrast, the valley itself was a black hole.

"Well ain't that cute," the Kid said, pulling up beside a concrete pylon in the noman's land under the Bridge. Against the pylon's twin on the other side of the street stood a Texaco. The lit-up drive-thru looked like it'd been ditched there by someone doing a smash-&-grab job. Tethered to the roof was a thirty foot inflatable Papa Walt. "The protest kids are gonna love that."

5C grunted.

"We here to enjoy the view, or do a job?"

The Kid tossed her cigarette butt & whistled over her shoulder.

"You heard the man."

The door of the van slid open. A moment later two shapes in overalls & visors moved across the headlights carrying a generator & a couple of spray packs. In a moment the generator was thumping at top volume while Belespon Joe & the Reverend in their Public Works Dept disguises went to work on the pylon graffiti w/ power hoses.

"That's our cue," Kid Katyusha said, reaching behind Zamyatin's huddled shape for her duffel bag. 5C & the Kid climbed out of the van & headed around to the rear of the pylon. Zamyatin struggled behind them, eye to the viewfinder, teeth clenched in the grimace of a monomaniac. Quietly & efficiently Kid Katyusha removed a coiled electrical cable & ran a line from the generator to a double-handled masonry drill. 5C was checking his clipboard, marking off crosses in blue chalk six feet off the ground & three feet apart. Shadows fell in weird chiaroscuro around piles of uncollected trash, bundles of wire mesh, a junked-out Trabi jacked on bricks — recently enough torched to still reek of burnt polymers. 5C slouched off to chalk the

adjacent pylon. The cantilevered 6-lane dual carriageway they held 50 metres aloft loomed black overhead.

Zamyatin swept the panorama, panned, zoomed. Kid Katyusha slid a pair of goggles on & shouldered the drill. When she leant on it, powdered concrete billowed out all over the place, gradually settling as the drill worked in deeper. The grinding of its tempered steel was almost entirely camouflaged by the thumping of the generator. To anyone passing by, it wld've just looked like just another futile effort at civic improvement being documented for TV propaganda. But the street was dead. The local bums had probably got wind of the riots & decamped, the graffiti punks busy lobbing cobbles or tagging cop cars or sitting on a dozen different rooftops watching it all & getting high. Even the surveillance cameras were dead, their eyes sprayed black. As far as 5C figured it, the timing cldn't've been better.

Twenty minutes later, Kid Katyusha was sealing the last of the Semtex in the last of the holes. 5C glanced at his watch. Fast work. One of the reasons he favoured the Kid, she made everything look like you cld do it in yr sleep. While she cleared away, 5C wired the detonators & set the timer. Zamyatin's camera didn't miss a detail. A little while later the crew were back in the van cruising over the river to higher ground. They'd dump the wheels & Zamyatin cld get his million-dollar footage. Within the hour, the Bridge wld come crashing down on that puff-up Papa Walt & some radical fringe group called the Š.V.E.J.K. wld leave a post on the antiglobalisation listserv claiming responsibility. The media wld work itself up into a nice bit of hysteria. Then tomorrow, & this was 5C's favourite part of it, another post wld appear — cat-among-the-pigeons stuff — saying it was really the cops who blew it up, to frame the protest kids. Keep 'em all guessing.

Far as 5C was concerned, the Corporations cld keep eating the poor till they shat themselves to death. But if greasing the hole w/a bit of Semtex helped to speed things along, then by all means. Five-Crimes was an artist. And an artist, it must be conceded, had responsibilities.

LOLA LOLA

Lola's waiting in the back of the car, slumming it for thrills. An old Tatra 603 the Nomenklatura left behind after the Great Shakedown of '89, dark & sleek, just like her. The driver's face is lost in the tint of the glass. She tells me to get in, says something to the driver & then we're heading north under the flyover, the railway sidings, past the gypsy bars, deep into Žižkov.

Lola's eyes are gleaming. You can tell she's sick. Not the usual ennui but something wrong w/ the organism. Desperation by increments. She's clutching my cock through my pants. Maybe she's really going over the edge this time.

Voiceover: "The bar's somewhere on a street I don't know the name of. By now I've lost count anyway."

Scene: Lola's resting her elbows on the countertop, cigarette in her left hand, a pack of Finas beside an ashtray. Egyptian. They rhyme w/ the black eyeliner & dark hair, cut straight across. Cleopatra in a black pullover. The wall clock ticks backwards & the decades recede. The barman empties the ashtray & the clock re-sets to zero. Were drinking absinth the way she likes it, straight-up from a short glass.

Pretty soon the madness gets into her eyes. She's given the driver the rest

of the night off. He'll be around at midday, knocking on my door, to collect the Miss & take her home for a cold shower. In the meantime she's determined to make the most of it. Laughter & accordions. The cut-glass ring on her little finger sparkling green in the soupy light. Her mouth getting wider & wider, trying to swallow all the air in the room at once.

Lola's locked herself in the bathroom & won't come out. The barman's kicking up a fuss. There's a lot of banging & cajoling. Finally she comes out, swaying like a ballerina on points. They pass her from one to another, all the men in the room, till she's spinning like a top. Outside she lies down on the cobblestones. The crowd gives it up as a bum act, so I get to squat down alone beside her like it's visiting hours at the sanatorium. Picture a vase w/paper flowers, air freshener, bedside partitions.

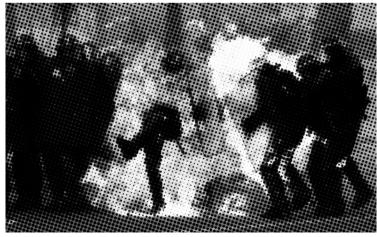
Voiceover: "I breathe in the night air, but its just as stale as the air we left inside. Looking down at her lying there w/ eyes full of imprecation, I feel like a man w/ the barrel of a gun in his mouth, who happens to have a taste for metal. It cld be a film, if anyone had the stomach to make it."

Dawn works its way slowly above the soot-blackened alpine redoubts of the projects, the forest of TV antennae, casting dull light along the open drains they call streets in this part of Plague City.

Lola's shivering, naked under a blanket, smoking the last of her Finas. She sits there, like a consumptive gargoyle, coughing in the morning smog. The place stinks of ancient copulations, excretions, vomitings, none of them ours. You can imagine people having died here of terminal inertia. The residue of their dreams clings to the wall like nicotine, jaundicing everything in sight.

Voiceover: "I take in the spectacle of Lola out on the ledge & wonder what about all this holds such appeal. People die from all sorts of things, but mostly it's the boredom that kills them. Bored of everything. Bored of being bored. And the boredom was killing her, too."

POETRY IS NO-END-IN-SIGHT



TILL THE CONCLUSION OF THE SYSTEM OF THINGS (FOR THE LULZ)

"Over & above the result of the calculation of space, time & quantity, we must allow a certain percentage which boldness derives from the weakness of others, whenever it gains the mastery. It is therefore, virtually, a creative power." (Carl von Clausewitz, ON WAR, 1832)

KILL

- 1. ENTERTAINMENT
- 2. VALUE

NOTHING HERE NOW BUT THIS MESSAGE

The urge to capture & subjugate our experiences has run through the history of socalled human development from the earliest authoritarian impulses, right down to our current enslavement information technologies. Attempts have been made to kill us but we have been appraised of these machinations by agents sympathetic to our cause & have evaded such efforts to silence us. It is necessary to reverse all political actions noted hitherto. By acts of sublimation we will force the hand of authority, etc.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

CREATE YR OWN FILM SCENARIO!

Psychological drama: Cop hires a hitman to kill him (hitman doesn't know).
Comedy: Two nations on the brink of atomic war (reason prevails).
Romance: A group of astronauts stranded in outerspace (invent communism).
Children's fantasy: Scientists discover humans aren't "alone" in the universe (consequences).

| Action-adventure: An alienated workforce goes shopping (clearan | |
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YELLOW BRICK ROAD

The first thing Wernher encountered, once he'd made it out through the service entrance, was a corpse blocking the ramp. It was still fresh & almost jammed the works when he drove over it. There were another two down on the sidewalk. Wernher flashed his torch at them. They'd both had their eyes pecked out. One of them was wearing a blue striped apron, Wernher thought he recognised the man who delivered his lunch every day from Katz's Deli. "Shameless," as Papa Walt wld've said, "the way them sumbitches just dropped in the street wherever they happened to be standing, dyin' out in general view of the populace. Got no common decency. Just think what kinda effect that sorta thing gonna have on the children — liable to cause years of untold suffering at the hands of quack psychiatrists." He wondered how long Papa Walt wild survive in his cryogenic vat, once the power-grid went offline for good. It cldn't be long now. Most of the technicians were likely dead already. As far as he cld see, he'd been the last one left in the whole of the Lunar Philanthropic Society HQ. His secretary hadn't even made it out of her chair. Rapid onset. Buboes the size of tennis balls erupting from her

neck. Probably suffocated to death. He'd never seen anything like it, even during the War. They'd had prisoners working on the rockets underground & sometimes the doctors experimented on them. Their heads wld swell up. Or their eyes wld go out of orbit. The worst cases never made it back onto the work detail. He'd suspected, yet never saw. But now he was seeing. Street after street strewn w/ roadkill. Corpses stacked at every intersection, smouldering in the dark. A band of scavengers moved silently from body to body, stripping it of whatever hadn't been stolen yet. Wernher retreated into the shadows, his Luger tracking their movements.

NO "VELVET" REVOLUTION

The coercive strategies of the corporate-state apparatus are not unknown—the question is, why does anyone accept them? How have people been conditioned to deny in themselves an existence unmediated by the state (when the state is little more than a self-legitimising protection racket posing as the guardian of the individual's "right to self-determination")? The grotesqueness of this flagrant paradox is that it is concealed from noone. It gives the lie to the idea that individual self-determination is anything more than narcissistic opportunism. The state holds a mirror to the anxiety & conceitedness of the overweaned. Its power stands in a direct relation to a wilful subjectification. Thus it proffers only the most corrupted gratifications. Yet POWER CONCEDES NOTHING.

The greatest mystification of contemporary life is the indispensability of the state, irrespective of its avowed ideological formation. This mystification, whose consequences have been shown time & again to be both inimical & deadly w/ regard to the emancipatory aspirations of its subjects, conspires behind a universal pretence to the *improvement* of humanity. Such compulsory optimism does nothing to mask the contradictory state of affairs that confronts us at every moment, but instead presents the compensating spectacle of the state's unique competence in this open-ended domain of "crisis management," henceforth representative of a "best of all possible worlds."

In the final account, the state justifies itself in opposition to the possibility of any other workable state-of-affairs. It forces upon all pretenders to its throne the calculatedly unreasonable demand to propose "functioning alternatives" (doomed in advance to insufficiency), as if one might debate w/a Sphinx. Yet the task of Švejkism isn't to astonish this master, as if it might applaud, but to steal the very air in which its cynical approbations resound.

— THE Š.V.F. I.K.

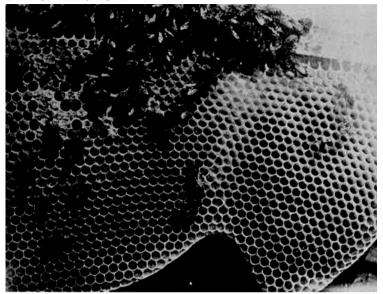
THE FIRST ACT OF SABOTAGE IS TO BLEND IN

Kid Katyusha cast an eye around & took in the scene.

"The lives of junkies & artists is such a treacherous moral landscape w/avalanches & peaks & nasty pitfalls."

She spotted the creep in the wheelchair straight off. Got a bead on him. Decided to tag along & see what the fucker was up to.

LAND OF MILK & HONEY



GÖTTERDÄMMERUNG

The space aliens stared at him through their microscopes. They'd found the capsule drifting in an irregular orbit, ejected from the Cryosat when its systems failed. The first sign had come when the time-stamps on the onboard mainframe scrambled. Papa Walt stared back at the space aliens w/ a blank fixity of expression that concealed the fact that he was bureaucratically dead. Those unenlightened sumbitches on Earth hadn't been able, or in any case willing, to parse the idea that Papa Walt might've transcended the standard protocols of mortality. The space aliens, however, being of another dimension & of a wholly inhuman scale, wld've remained invisible to the founder of PAPA WALT ENTERTAINMENT INC™ even if he wasn't dead. As a consequence, the blankness & fixity of Papa Walt's expression gave the space aliens pause for thought. Cld this creature's persistent yet impercipient gaze indicate that they themselves didn't exist? They frowned into their microscopes & pondered. They made disconsolate notations in their logbooks. They grew uneasy.

"IF IT MOVES, SELL IT!"

It was only a matter of time before they awarded him a Nobel Prize for services to profit.

HARRY DEAN STANTON IN THE DRIVER'S SIDE MIRROR

- Chinese got the biggest army in the world!
- Yeah, that's what they say. Biggest in the world.
- So we gotta be prepared.
- Prepared? Prepared what for?
- For when they invade.
- …š
- Them Chinese, we gotta be prepared, for when they INVADE!
- When they invade?
- Yeah.
- How they gonna invade? They gonna swim?
- Planes, tanks, they got MEANS!
- Buddy, Chinese ain't goin' no place but where they is.
- ···š
- Maybe they got the biggest army in the world, but they do anythin' but stay put & impress the locals w/ the prospect of instant arrest torture mass murder, 800 million downtrod pissed-off chinks is gonna rampage all over Bay-Jing's ass! That's all the goddamn INVADIN' they gonna do!

THE END IS NIGHT!

Well may we say the world's at an end, but who can prove it?

MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR

Our penetration beyond the unknown boundary of the "Line of Alienation" was accomplished as on a computer; we required a password. Strictly speaking. we were passing from a mythology generally accessible to a mythology visible only to the initiated. We had problems w/time & space, which were really commodities subject to the gravitational distortions of accumulated capital. Like all commodities, they only existed according to a binary system of "differences w/out terms." It was a case of History waiting for the Devil at the crossroads. What language is to abstraction, so the universe is to a grain of sand: "waves" & "particles," we learned, existed only in Biarritz. As soon as we set up our beach umbrellas & began to dig, the hidden cobblestones came into view. Our sandcastles represented merely the first feudal stage of a revolutionary praxis, eventually we'd come to develop the requisite technology to build on air. G.O.D., meanwhile, who had all the appearance of a chastised superego in a pair of diapers, sat by the water picking his nose. When not picking his nose, he stared at his finger. The moon, like something that threatened to melt away at any moment, hung in the sky w/a paranoiac fixity of purpose. It was a purely theoretical moon. This didn't prevent it from posina concrete questions: for example, about the conditions & means of production of theoretical moons. Immediately we set about erecting a poem w/35,000 kilos of thrust — to explore the speculative limits of epistemology's symbolic economy. How cld we've foreseen that the assumption of authorship wld become a political crime? We found ourselves caught in a augndary. Concerning our mission, everything seemed to point in the direction of the All-Consuming Capitalist Machine. Was it possible to buy a Golem that cld beat it in a fair fight? We were lost among phantoms of past action. Something

whispered from the cracks: "Pardon me, sir, I didn't mean to." What voice dared address us thus? Realism was eleven men kicking a ball around a field in anticipation of eleven other men mirroring & opposing their actions. Just substitute heads for balls: the history of Reason demanded consequences. At first the stadium had the appearance of a giant mirror, then later of a concentration camp; the bleachers where packed w/umpires blowing each others' whistles. The days sped by in a state of exhaustion. Once again, we were staring into a pool of our own vomit. We'd been caught w/our pants down in Dr Caligari's cabinet. Fog drifted through the streets. Everything tasted of young love & tegrags, in any case people were crying. The faces that stared back at us had the misshapen eyes of aliens. At least till the swelling went down. Of course it's spectacular when two million people spontaneously fall into each others arms. Once again we examined our patriotic motives. After a month of downpours we were washed out of a stormwater drain onto the seacoasts of Bohemia. The Bohemians were two thousand years extinct: they had nothing to do w/us. We were in our element. Here, we realised, was one of those arbitrary no-man's lands strewn in the wake of Versailles, Yalta, Dayton, Minsk & other flagrant land-grabs, We stood there as upon a threshold. A many-spired city rose from a morass of swastikas. hammers & sickles, yarmulks. The ravages of the Plague were visible wherever we looked. There was a real-estate sign, needless to say, prominently positioned, PLAGUE CITY, it said, VACANCIES, ENQUIRE WITHIN, There'd been rumours of this unconsecrated capital of the century's schizophrenia, but scarcely did we believe that one day we might actually stand before its walls. Its very image seemed to've emerged from a confrontation w/illicit desires. like something hysterically rebuilt that was continuously falling apart. It was all turmoil w/out purpose. Was our arrival prophetic or merely the coincidence it pretended to be? The first bridge to be burnt, we realised, was the one by which we wld return. Progress demanded it. But did we have anything in common w/ those we'd come to subdue? "Mental alienation," as spake Pinel, having "a common origin" & stemming "from an event or combination of similar events which must be regarded as its determinant cause." Meanina: it was only in the past that they ever had a future — first as television, then as History. Was it our task to show them the light, or simply point to the door? First things first was a modus operandi that'd stood many in good stead, as before a firing squid. But Ideology never says, I AM IDEOLOGICAL. Circumspection was thus the order of the day: speak quietly & carry a long periscope. So as not to arouse suspicions, we advanced w/our periscope straight up the front steps, as one proceeds from abstraction to reason, posing as itinerant entrepreneurs. This time the code was a haircut & shave two bits. First an eye in the peephole, then the real McCoy. Within the gates stood the Good Soldier Švejk in a coonskin Stetson. "This here town's been white since 1948," he drawled in a homely drawl, "& we plan to keep it that way." Bits of electrical wiring protruded from his neck, clearly it was precision craftsmanship. Behind him an old hag sat by the gatehouse tossing garlic cloves into a melting pot. The allegories were spreading. Any moment now a driverless coach was bound to arrive from the Script Department & we'd be escorted off the premises. Leaving our business cards, we retreated & waited for nightfall. Under cover of darkness we set to work, breaching the city's defences w/ the ruthless efficiency of those who are ruthlessly efficient. By

moonlight the streets appeared deserted. This moon, of course, was also a piece of obscene graffiti, an invitation to disorder. Upon the first wall we came across. scrawled in white lunatic hieroalyphics: ČECHY ČECHŮM, PRAHU NÁM!* Apparently others had preceded us. It was comforting to know we weren't alone in this collaborationist metropole of 74,000 deported Juden — not to mention the rats, many rats. We'd been warned that those who called themselves philosophers & poets were all in the pay of the cops. Trust no-one & not even then. In the restaurants, we paid for the cutlery, the plates, the salt, pepper, paprika, the non-existent bottle of ketchup. Food was another matter. Of course, a mouth can easily be silenced, it costs very little, less than to feed one. The dead, on the other hand, can be quite expensive, they refuse to shut up. History isn't required to stomach its just desserts. The supposed consolation was that for every Free Spirit suicided in a prison cell, there was one more Imagination in revolt. It was like the first spoonful of a cold soup. Was schizophrenia a solution? We told ourselves to bury our romanticism w/ the dead: THE IMAGINATION ALONE CAUSES REAL THINGS. Realism is the dream-life of tax collectors. The streets all had names that reeked of Versailles, Yalta, Washinaton D.C. At various times during the night we called them aloud to each other — their echoes resounded in many sleeping ears. just as the alienated imagination produces real alienation through passive "acts of capitulation." At every turn there were platitudes on display in shop windows, it wasn't enough to mourn the death of a personal myth of freedom. It was essential to recall that even a telescope was once a mythological beast none had ever in fact laid eyes upon. Added to this was a rigorous therapy by inserting all that was referential into the literal. & all that was literal into the essential. By means of erasure, removal, subtraction & abstraction, there was a chance we'd be able to discover a hidden path. Emotions, as wrote Ducasse. are an incompetent form of reasoning, though they appeal readily to the "wider spectrum of life" as reported on TV & social-realist media. In the spirit of demoralization, the picture they created was intended to cover the world: their little Allah-Jehovah w/a selfie stick. Our preparations for the return iourney were thus indefinitely delayed. At the first metro station we came across, we sought the most direct line. We referred to the sacred texts, the scrolls, the parchments, If an allegory existed, it was not unusual for it to take the form of a castle, even if buried deep underground. An allegory of stones, gods, men. Was this because to defend an idea of humanity they were forever becoming inhuman? To begin w/, we had to decide what we meant by humanity. Clearly the usual, ordinary human laws had to be suspended so that a reality subject to a different law cld be created. The law of mass entertainment in joyful, consensual slavery, for example. This was because the art of the past was simply a kind of insurance against a possible future. One pixel in a storm of TV static. For how long has reality itself been on the verge of death? It'd taken years, & gigantic armies, to slay the monster, only to become it. Because there cld be no revolution w/out inner turmoil. Perhaps it was only by a life of crime that we cld know how the mouth opens in wordless expectation. Conscience wld be content to denounce the whole thing as "incomprehensible," NOTHING IS INCOMPREHENSIBLE, Of course we had no choice in the matter &, besides, time was running out. We descended the milelong escalator steps w/a clearly defined sense of purpose. At approximately the mid-point we encountered the old had from a moment ago (Baba Jaga?

Mater Praga? Olga Havlová?) convulsively gripping both handrails. Eyes screwed shut, she refused to let us pass. Like the Maharal animating the clay Golem, we uttered the mysterious Shem, but to no avail: those foreign amulets of the sacred failed us, as surely they must. No amount of pleading, cajoling. commanding did the slightest good. In the end, w/sudden & premeditated violence, we commenced to struggle. The old hag employed her entire being as a barricade. We barely made it past. The old haa, though, was nowhere in sight. We cld no longer be sure if we had been the ones struggling to pass, or the one preventing them. We no longer knew WHERE WE ARE, having become the epitome of the "doubting foreigner," of the "guilty conscience," of the "alien within." All that remained was to awaken inside the carapace of a duna beetle. Hadn't we, in fact, merely begun to see ourselves AS WE ARE TRULY SEEN by the secret image manipulators? "Where oh where is my home of homes?" babbled the tomb of the Unknown Resistance Fighter. At the other end of the night, we rose from the ground like rats from holes, only to discover ourselves silhouetted against a dawn in which all ideological crows were white. The loudhailers stood atop their poles like malevolent flowers, spouting feedback. We listened for secret instructions. The loudhailers' dissonance assumed the form of an appeal, if not a "call to arms" — a call, rather, to the "inner desertion" of Švejkism. "Sir, we seem to be detecting a pattern inside the feedback," It widn't've been the first time — spectres were always haunting Zwischeneuropa. You cld read their names on long lists scratched into the walls. A cabbala of "words for Being," to be muttered over the delicate homunculus of the National Idea. They had their Dobermans out patrolling the language: if you got too close, they'd force you to buy a ticket. The Castle loomed in the near-distance, like something on a postage stamp, or a coin, or a tax office wall. As K. Marx wrote in "The 18th Fog of Louis Bonaparte": UNHEROIC AS BOURGEOIS SOCIETY IS, IT STILL REQUIRED HEROISM, SELF-SACRIFICE, TERROR, CIVIL WAR, & BATTLES IN WHICH WHOLE NATIONS WERE ENGAGED. TO BRING IT INTO THE WORLD. This cast its spell over the architecture, also. There was no getting away from the fact of what a notorious Nazi called "the way of revealing that holds sway in the essence of modern technology." Under such conditions, cld we ever expect the Golem to rise again? To assume humanity's place in the world, once & for all? Naïve hope? Existential horror? For what creates this abstract promise of resurrected matter in the form of an emancipation of the spirit, creates its "concrete unfreedom" also. The sermon over, we made a beeline for the Castle. If, on occasion, the longest way around is the shortest way home, this doesn't necessarily apply in quantum mechanics, where all paths are bound up together in a state of probability. From textbooks we knew that the state, in any form, was our sworn enemy. Born alienated into this world, our task was simple: defeat the bad auys by whatever means were available, creating in their absence concrete analyses of well-cemented problems. It didn't matter that humanity itself produced abstractions, only that it did so CONVULSIVELY, like Plague-death, since emancipative potential stood in a fixed ratio to the fact of alienation. We aimed our periscope. Decisively, the Castle walls were stacked w/corpses; they were invulnerable. But is there anything more meaningless, more desperate, than this freedom, this waiting, this invulnerability? To those who've dreamt of the future illuminated by a burning barricade at night, psychology proffers the compensating spectacle of

"language games" w/ which to construct new myths on a moment-to-moment basis. Now for example. By the time we concluded our survey of the Castle's defences, the countdown had already begun: our theories were quite useless. It was then that we were forced to conclude that the dissolution of the metaphysics of alienation isn't a purely intellectual task. Needless to say, all subjectivity is appropriation: even a self-made Golem has to thieve its substance from somewhere (law of conservation of mass as "Cartesian tragedy"?). How it lives, or that it lives, appears to it as a separate question. Yet existence itself, in the absence of a workable immunology, remains "irredeemable." Unwittingly, this is the acme of its optimism.

THERE ARE "UNIVERSAL" DUTIES WHICH TRANSCEND THE OBLIGATIONS OF OBEDIENCE IMPOSED BY INDIVIDUAL STATES

"We spoke like rats, we walked, we ate like rats." (Pierre Guyotat)

PROLIFIC & DEVOURER, INC

Like slaughtering a zombie, the more you tried to kill it, the more it grew & multiplied. W/ the right amount of humidity, it'd go on forever, spreading like pustules or fungus.

THERE'S NO EXTREME TO WHICH ALIENATION CAN'T BE PUSHED

We cannot count on the existence of any insurrectionary party or other insurrectional forces within a society which, though subjected to intolerable conditions of an endemic & not merely transient kind, is more prepared to accept either a reactionary or reformist panacea than to accept responsibility for the onerous task of emancipation. We must, therefore, be prepared to operate decisively in the absence of an organised movement in isolation, if necessary, w/ only a contingent view to general mobilisation. The task of the Š.V.E.J.K. isn't to lead a direct assault upon the state & the alianed forces of commodification but, by a tactical programme of sabotage & subversion, to assist in bringing about a conflict across a broader social-cultural front — w/ the aim of provoking the state to generalise its response & thereby accomplish, by its own operations, the work of focusing the insurrectional consciousness of those incompletely aware of the degree of their present disenfranchisement. Disenfranchisement not only by the corporate-state apparatus, but also its adjuncts in the economy of permissions & approvals of "popular action" represented by the established opposition parties, trade union bureaucracies & public intellectuals.

This disenfranchisement is nowhere more evident than in the expropriation of "emancipative" discourse by the very instruments of its negation, like a Guy Fawkes at a Westminster funfair — illuminating the latest apocryphal episodes in the afterlife of democracy, free thought & the avantgarde.

It is of course worthless to accuse the advertising industry of cynicism, in the use of words like "revolutionary" to denote each momentary nuance in an ever-changing scenescape of cheap consumer goods circulating in the world like space-junk. Worthless, too, to bemoan the opportunism of the culture industry, in converting what was once revolutionary in art into a prestige

economy via which the idea of revolution itself is normalised as a precession of commodities. Knowing that the very means-of-production of emancipative discourse has been annexed to an ideal scheme of commodity renovation — which, unblushingly, henceforth poses as the sole (authentic) realm of emancipative possibility — is only a first step. Since, at the same time, a "general acceptance" of this state-of-affairs is constructed around the falsely formed belief that the possibility of desirable change is no longer expressible anywhere else. In this way, the instruments of corporate-state normalisation (w/ whom it'd previously been in conflict) maintain a visible monopoly over the idea of emancipation turned inwards upon itself — & an image of "Culture" arises in radical opposition to culture itself.

Thus it isn't merely a question of breaking the rules of the state, but of the language in which they are stated.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

SHOT/COUNTERSHOT

In 1968 they hurled paving stones at Soviet tanks in protest against Communist Imperialism. In the year 2000 they threw Molotov cocktails at riot cops in protest against Capitalist Imperialism. In 2018 they'd probably all just be throwing-up into their handsets to get more "likes" till the Plague evened the score. C'est la vie, kid. C'est la vie.

MALOST

The giant neon swan flashes white against the sky. September. The world was supposed to've ended already. Maybe it had & this was just the curtain act, waiting for the death-rattle to sound a fanfare — the second coming — Hosanna! — millennial gobbledegook about the elect being hived off to remote wormhole constellations — virgins raped by G.O.D. & denied abortion rites or caesarean section. Picture the city, down on its knees like Leda, under a stage light w/ tape-recorded static capturing the mood. The little writhing Golem-foetus she's just given birth to making eyes up at you like a desperation that doesn't know it's just a second-stringer, a footnote, an anachronism hideously after the fact. Sure, the world's always ending someplace. And keeps on ending. Oh & the words keep making more words too & no-one's gonna volunteer to put a sock in it coz as long as man can draw breath he'll still find a sucker w/ an earhole to hustle.

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Tear gas & pepper spray can be sprayed from small hand-held dispensers or large fire-extinguisher size tanks. Pepper spray also comes in plastic projectiles which are fired at the chest to knock the wind out of a person, who then takes a deep breath, of pepper from the burst projectile. Tear gas is most commonly deployed via canisters, which are fired into crowds, sometimes directly at people. It's important that you know not to pick up the canisters w/out gloves as they are extremely hot. Be aware that the time it takes you to throw it will allow you to be heavily exposed. Both tear gas & pepper spray are skin irritants, causing burning pain & excess drainage

from eyes, nose, mouth & breathing passages. Pepper spray is more popular w/ authorities as an agent of control because of its immediate pain-causing auglities. It is harder to remove from the skin & has the capacity to cause first degree burns. If you are exposed to either, you may experience: stinging. burning in yr eyes, nose, mouth & skin — excessive tegring, causing yr vision to blur — running nose — increased salivation — coughing & difficulty breathing — disorientation, confusion & sometimes panic — intense anger from pepper spray exposure is a common response; this can be useful if you are prepared for it & are able to focus it towards recovery & returning to the action. Discomfort from tear age usually disappears after 5-30 minutes. while the worst pepper spray discomfort may take 20 minutes to 2 hours to subside. The effects of both diminish sooner w/ treatment. Because pepper spray penetrates to the nerve endings, its effects may last for hours after removal from the skin. Avoid use of oils, lotions & detergents because they can trap the chemicals & thereby prolong exposure. Wash yr clothes, yr hair & yr skin beforehand in a detergent-free soap. Use a water or alcoholbased sunscreen (rather than oil-based) — if vr choice is between oil-based or nothing, we advocate using the sunscreen; getting pepper sprayed on top of a sunburn is not fun. Gas masks provide the best facial protection. Alternatively, goggles w/shatter-proof lenses, respirators, even a wet bandana over the nose & mouth.

A DAY LIKE ANY OTHER

It all had the look of an aftermath in pornographic freeze-frame. You cld imagine it staying that way for the rest of eternity, Friday the 31st, in a suburb of Plague City.

"BETWEEN STASIS & MOBILITY, A CERTAIN SLOWNESS MAKES US DISCOVER A FIELD OF ACTIONS, WHERE THE EYE STOPS BEING ABLE TO TRACK THE COURSE OF AN OBJECT. GIVEN THAT SOMETHING MOVES FROM X TO Y... THE MEMORY WE HAVE OF ITS POINT OF DEPARTURE IS A FUNCTION OF THE SLOWNESS W/ WHICH IT ENACTS ITS TRAJECTORY. IF THIS SLOWNESS IS EXTREME, OUR EYE, OUR MEMORY LOSES THE RECOLLECTION OF X."

The camera is looking down from the rooftop. Street signage shades the sidewalk. Kid Katyusha is standing at the intersection below the flyover. She's looking, unawares, away from the camera towards the steps leading to the expressway. The rain has suddenly abated. Sheets of stormwater turn tarmac to latex. The streetlights reflects in it like millions of pieces of broken glass.

Separated from the crowd, her outline is next seen standing at the top of the steps, then slowly descending again, w/ a child who for a moment the camera seems to recognise. The child is gesturing towards someone or something else outside the picture. As the child turns, his features become clear. It is the boy with the stick, poking at the dead rat in the river. But what's he doing here?

Kid Katyusha looks away into the distance, in the direction the boy has been pointing.

GOT A FEELING Y'VE BEEN HERE BEFORE?

"If you can figure out what a second chance is in a place like this, kid, they'll give you one free." (Old Timer)

THE BRIDE TO BE

The needle was barely out of his arm, before Bouzid was gripped by the first symptoms. He felt suddenly like a cornered funeral parlour rat. A coffin on trestles. The oven door. A couple of stooges in purple bowler hats & black suits, like stiffs leading a parade. Bent women in veils. Arrayed in the toonarrow coffin, a waif in the wedding dress, covered in Plague sores, arms piously crossed, rigid hands grasping a mirror in a frame. Some gilded lily of a bitch. You'd cry a tear or two yrself, if it weren't for the fact yr number's up. They're only pretending, all that waterworks, sniffling into their camphorated handkerchiefs. The first chance they get they'll pounce, rip yr stinking hide to shreds. Death brings out the hunger in them.

THE TRUE CUNTISHA OF HIS DREAMS

She wipes the blood from her mouth w/a grin, face cratered by enormous pox scars, like an out-turned stomach w/a corners in it. In ancient times she'd've butchered whole seraglios unblinking. A poxmarked Sardanapalus w/a scimitar strapped to her loins they called "Ol' Razorback." You'd often hear some crone in a black veil say to whichever blanched little pansy'd just got fresh off the boat, "Last pretty one like you, Ol' Razorback split from butthole to brainstem. Bane of the fleshpots of Assyria." Well right there & then the pansy's wig'd go white to its roots, busting her highheels bolting like mad down the gangplank & howling for that boat to turn back, & all them Kingston sailors just flashing their orthodontics in the sun, brighter than their eyes, as they sailed away singing "Tally me banana, Missus Talleyrand." You ever hear the saying, son, between a rock & a hard place? Well, missy here, she was right up against that hard place & knew all about it too.

SHIT IN A SHOPPING BASKET

Their task was to provide a steady stream of enthusiasts.

SURGEON GENERAL'S WARNING

The following materials can be concealed inside a cigarette packet as a basic incendiary device: sulfuric acid, potassium chlorate & sugar. Seal the sulfuric acid in a small test-tube & knot the test-tube inside a durable latex condom. Seal the potassium chlorate & sugar, along w/ the first condom, inside a second condom. To activate, unseal or break the test-tube w/out perforating the condom. The sulfuric acid contained in the test-tube will take approximately 30 minutes to penetrate the first condom. When the acid then makes contact w/ the potassium chlorate & sugar, combustion will occur instantaneously. For maximum effect, the cigarette box should be secreted among flammable materials.

ŠVEJKISM ISN'T THE MYTHICAL POWER THAT TRANSFORMS TOTALITIES

Noon, the civil defence sirens wound up for their minute of deafening cacophony, then died away. Which meant it must be Wednesday. As dependable as clockwork. The type of dependable that stands behind an anxiety. The anxiety of no longer being there. Guaranteed.

Buzik sat on the rubbish pile by the smashed ventilation duct with a commie gasmask perched atop his head. He'd made a reckie down into the bunker to see what he could scavenge & found a group of old weirdoes getting stoned. He scored the gasmask & some tinned sardines & a bottle of fizzy wine that tasted like apple vineagr.

He took a few more swigs to see if anything'd happen. The fizz almost blew his head off, came right up his nose. He pulled the grey mask down over his face & sat there smelling the wine fumes. Through the foggy portholes the world looked like a 1000-year flood had sucked it under. Seaweed drifted by. A fleet of jellyfish. A fat man in a suit with no head.

Buzik laughed so hard he thought he was going to puke. The fat man & the jellyfish all laughed too.

IN HAPPIER TIMES

Belaspon Joe was a sick man. He'd been that way since the foetus died. A ghost that went out & got miscarried before it cld reincarnate as himself in the divine form. He took a slug of absinthe. The city below was all grey streaked w/ dirty light. He was twenty levels up on a construction scaffold just watching it all go to shit. Way up on what everyone called The Great Wall, five miles of highrise bordering a funny farm... Pretty soon you lose count of those little blue pills, but who cares? The air was warm. The sky was warm. The rain was warm. Belaspon Joe sat there naked tipping the bottle down his throat. The protest kid next to him was naked, too, except she was shivering. He cldn't remember her name, cldn't remember how the fuck she'd even got there. Just another one of those occasions. Yep.

POWER IS NEVER RIDICULOUS IN ITS OWN EYES

The supposed failure of the revolutionary project — encapsulated in Fukuyama's "End of History" at the fall of the Soviet Bloc in 1989 — has been turned into an alibi for the sublimation of emancipative thought in the form of an accusation: that the cause of this sublimation, & the accompanying acceleration of all forms of alienated-production, is the failure of the revolutionary project itself. This sophism — under the guise of postmodernist neoliberalism — was designed to engender a radical new species of alienation: the perceived impossibility of emancipative thought beyond its commodified form.

Acquiescence to this pseudo-historical viewpoint is the principle adversary of critical consciousness today. Worse, it represents an active collaborationism w/ those forms of cultural-economic totalitarianism presently dominating the global horizon — fully intent upon relegating all "revolutionary" discourse to a conventional & ultimately passive subcategory of literary fantasy. By way of "compensation," you're sold a real-estate instalment plan — for a slice of the moon. But why is it easier to believe in "revolution on credit,"

than in revolution forestalled? To migrate across a lifetime between one conurbation & another, as from a nursery to a retirement home, persuaded of telemarketing utopias of palm trees & slot machines, but not of a world w/out the state?

Since the dawn of modern times, every cell in this collective panopticon has been its own "reality TV." Left cold by the prospect of examining "itself" — which has paradoxically come to appear as the acme of artifice — neoliberal humanity has been freed by virtue of its constraints to contemplate the prospect of its own emancipation as a telenovela of endless Rousseauisms: the primordial nature it dreams of returning to in a passively impassioned revolt against the "self" — like so many pristine forests of cliché set ablaze.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

LE CHARME DISCRET DE LA BOURGEOISIE

The Lazarine was so coy & everyone was sad & hungry. Other people have their other ways of seeming but she was always so evasive & made the wrong decisions because she was just a bit too uptight. They took turns analysing each other:

- Maybe everything isn't always so fabulous. It's time for some death. This is what's really happening.
- What do you mean? It's yr dirty mind. All you think of is destroying what's beautiful & good.
- It was just now, before you came in. Every time someone turned on the radio or the television they said something like fifty million people are going to die. That started it. It's not that I feel sorry for them, it's just that people go by & it doesn't really matter to them that someone they don't know personally got killed. Sometimes I think of an enormous aquarium where I'm looking in at all these people floating in the water & not moving, but eyes full of expression. They must've drowned or something & then again it's possible the glass wall's going to break at any moment & I'll be drowned too. That's when I try to wake up, because it must be a dream & I know that I'll have to explain it to you. But there's no reason for it at all, just a surface reason.
- Like when you touch me, it's mechanical. You're not really touching me at all. It's just surfaces. Like shopping & window dressing.

AID & SUCCOUR

The Old Bastard w/ eczema all over his face was staring at the top of her thighs. Laddered nylons & garterstraps & lines of tattooed razorwire. Kid Katyusha raised her eyebrows, as if to say "What the fuck exactly you lookin at mistuh?" Then to emphasise the point she uncrossed her legs to give the Old Bastard an eyefull of her own private Rolling Stones monogram. Watching the scene from his barstool, Five-Crimes smirked.

O.B. kept staring just the same as before.

After a while Kid Katyusha put her drink down & drawled at him, "You aonna buy or just lookin' all day?"

The O.B. tilted his head at her, like he was registering her for the first time.

"Buy?" he growled, shoving a pair of inch-thick lenses onto his nose, blinking through the smeared glass. "Bitch, whore, shit," his bony fist came down on his knee. "Had enough of it! They can't push a man like me around & not get what's comin'!"

Kid Katyusha grinned & moved her knees further apart, lifted her drink to her mouth again. The warm stagnant air caressed her snatch. "My hero," she winked. The O.B.'s face had gone purple, he was about ready to start frothing at the mouth.

"Aint no respect no more," he shouted.

The barman came over & cuffed him behind the ear, gave him the bum's rush. Kid Katyusha cld hear the O.B. howling in the street. She re-crossed her leas.

"Aw Joey," she said, "he was just a harmless old bum."

The barman sneered, coming back from the door, "goddamn fuckin geriatric commies, I hate their guts."

"Well people were healthier when they lived closer to their filth," drawled Five-Crimes, fingering his grey suit collar. "Sometimes a man just wants to be reminded of that."

RESURRECTING A DEAD IDEA

Why walk on water? Why limit yrself to that?

DEATH AS BOURGEOIS REALISM

A long gallery w/ dark mahogany cabinets, carved & polished, cushioned in velvet. A large antique clock set in a recess, ticking audibly. Stuffed oriental birds & glass domes, vases, brass & cut glass objects. A grand piano. Fatima's hand. At the end of the gallery, a door opens onto a large. Light from chandeliers is reflected in the glass.

A number of scenes recur & occupy our attention:

The room is in disarray. Chairs overturned. Tapestries torn from the walls. There is evidence of some sort of struggle.

A tall woman is standing beside the piano w/ her back turned. She's wearing a black dress. A black veil. Perhaps this detail alone will give us something to go on?

The next scene follows in immediate succession:

An almost identical room. The same woman is still standing there, in the same place, as if simply transported between the two locations. This room, however, is not in disarray. Somebody sits in a palatial armchair watching her. Doctor Bouzid.

In this scene she's pretending to be his patient. She slips from the black dress & lies on the table, face-up beneath her veil. Silk on polished wood. Bouzid stands & approaches, cigar in hand.

Lightly he strokes the top of her thighs. Milk white. A fire burns in her groin. The heat of it ripples up through her flesh. The red of her nipples against the dull reddish glow of the cigar tip.

THE SENSES ARE FRAUDULENT ORACLES!

What at times seems to be double is really a trick of light, a play of appearances. Perhaps we will discover they were the same all along? An

object, simultaneously looked at & displayed. Two women who're really one. The line of sight is equivalent between the camera & the woman's masked gaze. The image of her body & its proposed function. The woman (we all know who she is) is posing in front of the camera as before a voyeur whose presence she is in no way deceived about. Perhaps it's the camera which is thus rendered naked. When she's not calculating the effect of her body posed in such a way against the light, her thoughts drift. Sometimes vacant, sometimes redolent of strange objects. The convex mirror of the camera's lens conjures in her mind images of distended cucumbers grown in long, straight jars, like preserved foetuses. She imagines herself as a long glass jar. Standing up straight, lying straight as death. "I can't move," she tells herself, holding the pose. "Perhaps if I don't move it'll go away."

TO NAME SOMETHING IS TO GAIN POWER OVER IT

The Lazarine fainted. When she didn't respond, Cuntisha pounded her head against the floor. Somebody put an opera recording on the phonograph. The Lazarine began writhing about, a yellowish white liquid frothing at her mouth. Her hair was in disarray & her dress was up around her hips.

EATING A TURD CROISSANT

History isn't required to stomach its just desserts.

DREAMBOAT

"Hello Lola."

The blonde looks up from her empty glass & straightaway I can see her eyes aren't right. The other losers glance over then put their heads back down, making a show of minding their business. The barman shrugs & puts another whiskey in front of me w/out my having to ask. Lola just smiles.

"Hi fella, slumming it for thrills?"

"You know me, Lola,"

"Feelin' lonely honey? Lookin' for some woman comfort?"

"Save the pitch, Lola. What're you drinking?"

"Oh I'm all drunk-out for the time being, lover. Wait till I get a little dry land under my feet. Maybe if I'm lucky, a dreamboat'll come along in the meantime, to carry me off over the sea. Wha'd'ya think my chances are?"

Lola does an unconvincing job of keeping the smile from sliding off to one side of her face. Her eyelids droop from the weight of too much mascara on the fake lashes. The management pays her to sit at the bar every night, as a sap to the clientele. In the smoky half-light she's all woman to whoever wants to know, parked there like she really is just waiting for that ship to come in. Right up the stinking Vltava.

Some people want an expectation they only have to reach out to satisfy. Not Lola. Even doing nothing, you cld see she always did it the hard way.

PUNK'S NOT DEAD

Coma victim.

ENTR'ACTE

The camera pans to a man's fingers carefully setting a needle onto a record. The record starts. It's an aria from some reactionary bourgeois opera designed to paint the suffering of the masses into a pretty picture. The camera pans away, across rows of naked buttocks. Slavomira raises her hand & in it the black handle of the whip gleams.

"Eat this my lovelies," she screams, giving the little Marie Antoinettes what they've had coming to them.

THE ACTIONS IT HATH DWELT UPON

Blood from the nose from the ears from the mouth. Whose blood is it this time? She's crying. She's trying to stop up the holes in her face.

ANNUAL REPORT

The river is glowing in the predawn, the trees are glowing w/ dew in the aura before daylight. A door opens & closes on the landscape. A dead rat floats in the river, bloated, like a human brain.

AS THE CAMERA NARROWS ITS FIELD

The image startles Kid Katyusha from her sleep. The walls of the room resemble playing cards. The hanged man, the bastinado.

She watches the pendulum motion of the world as though tied by the feet, swinging at the end of a long rope.

Her hair falls down around her face, trails in the air.

"I hear the litanies, the choruses. A figure, hanging in the sky above the garden: the odour of the river, of the brown, vagina-moist soil."

ROBOTS KNOW THE FUTURE, THEY'VE SEEN THE SAME FILMS YOU HAVE



encephalograph, by turns igneous, diffuse, conjectural, ersatz, blind. Thunderheads hung low over the freightyards. Above the steel gates the Š.V.E.J.K. had sprayed their tribal runes — RBT MCHT FR — in fluorescent yellow. They called the yards Sámo's Empire, on account of the mythical hobo emperor who once reigned over them. The Š.V.E.J.K. paid obeisance to no-one, ironists of subversion, their existence was attested to only in random spray-paintings, slogans for consumption by feckless cops & the mentally damaged, designating nothing but that a rumour had once passed that way & lingered a moment upon the enigma of a bare wall, a piece of exposed concrete, a strip of corrugated steel.

Zamyatin paused long enough to puzzle over the sign & fail to extract meaning from it. Meanwhile the sky shifted, rose, poured over onto itself. He cast a panicked look behind him. The churning blackness was like an ocean about to spill down through the container canyons in some doomsday Flood of Ages. He wldn't've stood a chance. Hurrying, he staggered across the tracks towards the depot & shelter, only to pull up suddenly in the middle of the junction. His face glittered w/ sweat. His eyes swivelled sickly.

A giant THING appeared to've sprawled itself against the flyover. He had the uncanny feeling it'd SEEN him. It appeared to bristle, to move. He glanced up at the storm then across at the THING. Like Scylla & Charybdis in that video game. Not liking the choices, he backed onto a siding, the sound of his breathing all of a sudden too loud. It no longer seemed advantageous that no-one else was around. Thunder cracked. He cld feel the air being slowly sucked in around him, but he didn't move, not yet. He narrowed his eyes & stared at the THING he was determined to see more clearly but saw nothing, an outline merely, a blur.

Behind it, albedo like the moon in photographic haze or a searchlight in fog, a sheet of blind-out white. Someone'd hacked the code & wiped all the billboards on the flyover. Like a monster drive-in powered by arc-lights. He didn't wonder for long, the reason wasn't long coming. The THING turned into silhouettes, vehicles, men in armour, advancing or retreating he cldn't tell. Advancing most probably. More thunder. A geyser shot out across the lights, jewelled in paracelene. Diamonds & teargas gently rained. W/ difficulty Zamyatin steadied his camera. The sky cracked one last time before the storm truly broke.

ICARUS' SISTER

She's falling & falling.
The floor's so far below her now.
The more she falls the further away it becomes.
It's a great height.
Things become infinitesimally small.
The world itself recedes into a distant zero.

THE SICKNESS UNTO DEATH

There is an advantageous degree of uncertainty about the place & time of the coming confrontation, & even more about its outcome. It is said that noone so far has provided the vision, the strategy, the instruments, to channel

the almost global discontent towards a revolutionary conclusion. In this sense, perhaps, the conflict that is about to begin will appear "spontaneous." But only to the extent that the media has programmed the spectator masses to accept the idea that spontaneity, naivety, ignorance, amnesia and a lack of preparedness are all somehow virtues. Triumphalist postmodern-neoliberalism has since extended to all areas of contemporary life & is nowhere more visible than in the realm of "public protest."

The media are always gratified to moralise & then mourn over the "democratic prerogative" of protestors to turn themselves into riot-cop fodder. They don't say: The exponential criminalisation of protest & heavyhanded "law enforcement" make seizing the airwaves — by hacking, occupying or disabling the TV studios, etc. — an "attractive alternative." Likewise, the established opposition parties waste their time urging protestors to keep quiet & stay in their homes for fear of backlash, since the criminalisation of protest is tacitly of their making.

But protest & backlash are also "signs of something deeper" than a momentary struggle for power in the streets. They are signs of the sickness concealed by the mass-hypnotising spectacle of "social media" & the endgame of narcissistic capitalism. The sickness of a world threatened w/ fatal obsolescence, by that which it has come to adore even more than itself. The sickness of a world in which protest & backlash represent a "taste for the whip" to punctuate the unending sentimental pornography of the boredom & entertainment economies. The sickness you are expected to secretly embrace, like a guilty conscience.

One should always be wary of the supposedly sick.

— THF Š.V.F. I.K.

LÍDA'S CHILDHOOD

"I'm not nothing," she screams. A vision of corpse-strewn salons, the Winter Palace, tiled hallways slick with pus from exploded buboes, black blood dripping from chandeliers, wall-length mirrors revealing swathes of atrocity in shredded crinoline & crotchless tuxedoes, obedient daughters gouging out the eyes of their fathers, matrons gurgling in paroxysms of death-lust. Fountains & dark courtyards wrapped in December fog. A bayoneted swan. She's running & running forever through that maze, the cold working its ache into her loins, where even now she can feel the searing lash. Waves of longing fill her w/ emptiness. Waves of emptiness. Longing. Waves.

PLOTLINES BELONG IN CEMETERIES

Business's gotten too far out of hand for there to be any point reforming it. Only thing's to blow it up, before it blows everything else up. Like the Ol' Guy says, "We're in a state of emergency, all you can do is go back to the drawing board."

ŠVEJK YR BOOTIE

A mambo mamba doin' the Sambo samba & the Rambo rumba & the Ghandi gumbo

& the bimbo bomba & the dingo's donga, the labia limbo & the tynea tango. Eine lange Schlange in the profondo rosso. & a badass bongo playing the conger conga. w/some video voodoo & a ziaay zumba. & a mushy manao mama's chubba-chubba. L'il Willy Wonker wants a auim-juice auanao & the President's Poodle does a juicy Diango while ol' Billy Bob strums a belligerent banjo & the backdoor boys bana-out a Giuoco Piano. Now the gollywog girls grab a handful of hairdo from the peckerwood proles doin' the dandruff dervish. while the hipster whores & the penguin prelates all settle their scores w/ an American cheesecake. And the syelte sombreros & the agudy aguchos sing Oh baby baby I got rabies maybe, but if you jazz my jukebox I'll put juice in yr dewdrops for a gyrating doo-wop w/ a Marxist graucho. Coz the pole-vaultina Pollack's chewing pie w/his prozac & the fishfinger fryboy's doing a filleted fullback, in the arsehole of nowhere where there's nothing but arseholes & they post yr prostate in a priority parcel. Do you dunk yr donut in a barrel of borscht, or a pickled dill in the rear of a Porsche? I got grits in my girdle & a griddle for guts. but if you treat me right I'll turn soup to nuts. I clda poached a preacher or joyrode a Jewboy. if I'd goosed the gander w/ some salient slander, but I rigged the radar just to vamp Darth Vader & now I'm stuck as a slavegirl in a shaving commercial. W/a mambo mamba doin' the Sambo samba & the Rambo rumba & the Ghandi aumbo...

LANGUAGE KNOWS WHERE YOU ARE

A long corridor w/ opaque walls. The Lazarine is walking & walking as though through a maze. The corridor is straight but seems to break off in other directions. The doorway recedes further & further.

"I'm floating through the pain," she says. "I can't breathe. What am I doing here?"

The light is flickering. She stares at the bulb close up, w/ moths swarming over it. A metallic reek of singed moth-hair. Someone is looking down at her. "You've spilt something. It's pouring out of you."

The room is luminous & opaque. The walls like a skein of yellowed membrane across the eye. The membrane is swelling, filling w/ yellow liquid. She can't close her eye. Each time it bulges between the eyelids. Something flutters inside it.

"A catheter w/ light pouring out of the sun."

MALEVICH

The room was very black. Then someone opened the curtains. A harsh white square of light obliterated the darkness entirely.

VIRTUE REWARDED

"Don't shoot!" they said, waving a white screen. But the boys shot 'em anyway.

| WHITE SCREEN | | | |
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MISQUOTATIONS OF THE WORLD

Kid Katyusha stands on the rooftop, her head & left shoulder framed in the viewfinder. She is leaning w/ one hand on the balustrade, looking down at the expressway.

Voice-over: "Proof differs from analysis. Proof establishes that something happened. Analysis shows why it happened."

An army tank passing on the flyover. As it crosses her line of vision, a soldier tracking sightlines w/ a mounted machinegun appears to look at her then look away again.

"Proof is a mode of argument that is, by definition, complete. Only what is already contained at the beginning is proven at the end. In analysis there are always further angles of understanding. Analysis is always incomplete."

THE BRIDGE

The Bridge ran three lanes in each direction, from the Cop Museum rotunda straight to Vyšehrad, half a mile over the valley. Eden Welles stood out on the slates by the door of his studio, a crusted glass wintergarden w/ duct-taped panes. Cannabis resin had infused every inch of wood frame, from

when the studio had been a greenhouse: now it was a jumble of throwaway canvases no-one was ever likely to see till Welles got sick of staring at them & recycled the lot — square metre after square metre of "Stupid Robots" in the faux naïf style. He'd settled on the theme early on. 1950s sci-fi movie robots menacing innocent children, serving breakfast to middle class suburban families, reading poetry to rooms full of robots in berets & beatnik accoutrement, robots w/ guns, a robot standing at an easel w/ pallet & brush gazing straight out at the viewer w/ dead robot eyes. Later, when the Bridge blew up, it was like a giant crucified robot coming down off the cross. Welles saw the whole thing from his studio. The image seared into his brain. Something vast, majestic. Slow motion wld've been a false poetic movement, instead the way it came down was in a sudden decomposition. It was the vision Welles'd been waiting for. Suddenly his entire life's work assumed purpose. He rushed to find a blank canvas, to get the idea down, just as the studio's glass ceiling shattered resoundingly.

LONG NOSE, HIGH CHEEKBONES, SUNKEN EYES

When we confine our attention to any one form, we are deprived of the weighty arguments derived from the nature of the affinities which connect together whole groups of organisms, their geographical distribution in past & present times, & their geological succession. The homological structure, embryological development, & rudimentary organs of a species remain to be considered, whether it be humanity or any other animal, to which our attention may be directed.

ONE IDEA'S AS GOOD AS ANY OTHER

For example, how you feel:

Lovely

Shitty

Low

Niahtmarish

Ice

Culpable

Nonexistent

Degraded

Slippery

Black

White

Dismal

Decayed

Shivering

Fictional

Disabled

Old

Vaaue

Dark

Unnecessary

[Continue in this vein till you no longer "feel" anything, etc.]

GOLEM CITY BLUES

Well I love that misery, mama, & sure that misery loves me.

NO ROOM W/ VIEW

A dank basement room. Along the wall under the half-window facing the street at eye level was a couch covered by a sheet. Against another wall was a bed. In the corner stood an alter w/ a crucifix. The rest of the room was littered w/ worn rugs, articles of clothing, potted plants, a stuffed parrot in a cage, cat hairs. A multitude of Siamese cats hid underneath a wardrobe at one end of the room. Their eyes stared out at her. Green cat eyes. Unblinking.

METAPHILOSOPHY

Kid Katyusha's dream was always the same. Men in gasmasks wld be raping her in a burned-out factory. And then she'd wake up & someone she cldn't remember wld be fucking her in a room she'd never been in before & she'd try to slice the guy up & it always ended badly. When she woke for real there'd be blood in her mouth. She was afraid one day she'd clench her teeth so tight they'd break.

ADVENTURES IN THE EMERGENCY AIRLOCK

"How can you take responsibility for things which don't exist? When I look at you I think, I've dreamt of you so much that you're no longer real. I don't know if I'm awake or asleep. How can I be sure that you're you?"

"Do you know anything about objects, what causes them?"

"I dream of having a body, that's all."

CAPITALISM W/ A HUMAN FACE

Enslaved to the hypothesis of emancipation, we willingly perform in our own collective show trial, constantly impelled to surrender everything. These daily humiliations remind us that the *idea of universal emancipation* remains a force in the world — by which *not only* the subjects of corporate totalitarianisms are seduced or oppressed. Yet the danger we're faced w/ today is less the direct threat of seduction or oppression, than that of boredom posed as self-knowledge. Boredom, posed as *subjective freedom* & drawn from a collectivized non-experience of *collective subjectivity*, stands against the "hard labour" of dissent.

Since the image that capitalism holds up to the world is one of universal alienation disguised as emancipation, any critique that engages capitalism on its own terms is doubly alienated. It isn't enough to observe, as if at a remove, those vast psychiatric conveyor belts of urban life, designed for optimal surveillance like the ubiquitous "open plan" corporate concentration camps in which the mass of white-collar "office workers" perform routinised alienation in a self-negating "reward structure" of mortgage credits. Nor is it sufficient to acknowledge that equivalent terms apply in the realms of intellectual & cultural labour — as if these are separate considerations. The task of the Š.V.E.J.K. isn't to "produce" specialised critiques the way one might produce

objects of contemplation, in accordance w/a political aesthetic.

In order to disrupt this economy of pseudo-critical consumption, the Š.V.E.J.K. must risk actions that can only arouse hostility & incomprehension in those who have taken it upon themselves to regard a refusal to conform to the established modes of "discourse" as an assault upon the very authenticity of collective social experience itself. But like the procurateurs of the Children's Crusade, it is these self-appointed "defenders of the faith" who, as accomplices in its subsidiary alienation, are the true "enemies of society." Above all, these "shepherds of the people" stand vigilantly opposed to any thought that "society" might possess a "will of its own." Forever evoking the spectre of populism, they hone their demagoguery to a fine art. Proclaiming themselves beyond ideology, these pseudo-critics demand that — like "lambs of G.O.D." — the masses be likewise purified of the taint of consciousness.

Neither aware nor aroused, the individual "citizens" of this most ideal polis are permitted only to be sufficiently bored.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

PLAGUE PROPS

In the absence of silence is the eversame. "Things aren't about the persecution of a scapegoat anymore." Pasolini's talking out of the empty well of the TV. "Now it's about a vast, deep & calculated endeavour of repression." If I'm thinking this it's because it needs repeating? One day they'll abolish roads & many other things. Black dots in my eyes. What was fluid a moment ago is now impassable, solid. Disappointment. Death comes only once in a lifetime.

THE DREAM LIFE OF MARTHA DODD (A DIVERSION)

The room is very white. A girl. Her features are slight & symmetrical. There's no outstanding facial bone structure. Vivid & penetrating eyes, full of small timidities. On the wall hangs a portrait of Der Führer. When the man in the portrait comes in several hours later he's struck by the studied manner in which the girl is sitting in the room doing absolutely nothing. He has the sudden impression that she sees the whole thing as some kind of movie in which she's starring. Right then, she was playing someone alone in a room.

"I'm so far away," the girl said, staring at Hitler w/ wide blank eyes, "you can't reach me."

"We have to talk, y're not acting yrself."

"How is it better to act naturally than to act as somebody else? I'm nobody anyway. Anything to do w/ emotions is cruel or a fake. I cut myself up & don't feel anything. Is that what love is? I'm sick of expectations. You expect something, but you're really empty. You want to fill the holes up but they don't exist you only think they do, because it's what you are. There's no inside or outside, just surfaces."

She kept scratching at her arms. She gave the impression of someone screaming $\mathbf{w}/$ their mouth shut.

"Well," said Hitler impatiently, "what is it?"

"When I'm asleep it's as though there's someone watching me."

"Do you like to be watched? The feeling of being watched?"

"When you look at something which isn't moving or doing anything at all

it makes you more aware of yrself."

Her hands kept crawling. They wldn't sleep. Hitler cldn't keep his eyes off them. They produced in him a sudden desire to strangle something.

"Don't touch me!" she gasped. "If you touch me it's mechanical. There's just surfaces. You're not really touching me at all. The wall's aren't real either, haven't you noticed? We're in a theatre. It's small. The space where the audience should be is steeply tiered. Everything is white. But you scratch at he white w/y fingernails & it's just paint. It comes away & all that's underneath it is glass. I'm afraid of moving because then it might break."

MANY-BODY PROBLEM

It occurred to more than one observer, that the riot's dynamics cld be considered as a particular application of the Kessler Effect.

THE MARTYRDOM OF SAINT LAZARINE

The first figure has a hollow torso, the open space uniting the back & front of the figure in one simultaneous rhythm. The upper limbs flow into the lower limbs w/out interruption. The head & breasts & shoulders are unified in one clasping, knuckle-like extension, the lower limbs retracted. Gradually she abandoned her natural pose in favour of the formal variations that cld be derived from it.

MIRROR MIRROR

"Who's there?" A voice behind the grate. She feels the green eyes shine w/obscene malice. She's carefully applying mascara to her eyelashes. A close up of the eye in the mirror. The eyelid faintly quivering. The eye appears enormous, liquid. Mascara is thickening the eyelashes.

THE EYE OF THE STORM

Why settle for commonplace lashes when you can have Fabulash? Our exclusive lash-maximising formula works w/a patented lash-perfecting brush to build & separate for 100% fuller, seriously fabulous lashes, w/out a clump in sight. For soft, beautiful lashes, use Fabulash. Adds 100% more volume. Enriched w/silk proteins & vitamins A & E to keep lashes soft. To safeguard purity, always treat applicator w/ the same sanitary care you give yr eyes. Reserve it for yr private use. Do not dilute product w/ any additive. Do not use any eye cosmetic if yr eye is injured, irritated or infected. Consult an eye doctor immediately in case of injury. Ingredients: water, paraffin, stearic acid, isododecane, copernica cerifera (carnauba) wax, polysilicone-6, beeswax, cyclopentasiloxane, alyceryl stearate, triethanolamine, acacia Senegal gum, nylon-12, hydrogenated stearyl olive ester, hydrolysed silk, lecithin, panthenol, retinyl palmitrate, tocopheryl acetate, phytantriol, persea aratissima (avocado) oil, triticum vulgare (wheat) flour, lipids, polyethylene. hydroxyethylcellulose, simethicone, dimethiconol, hydrogenated polyisobutene, sorbitan laurate, polysorbate 20, dimethicone crosspolymer-3, propylene glycol laurate, propylene glycol stearate, magnesium ascorbyl phosphate,

polyglyceryl-3 distearate, polysorbate 60, myristic acid, palmitic acid, guar hydroxypropyltrimonium chloride, phenoxyethanol, methylparaben, propylparaben. May contain iron oxides. Brush through lashes from base to tips. Repeat for even greater lash impact. Remove w/soap & water.

DMS

It was almost midnight. Zamyatin made the final edit. Then, hand shaking from fever or trepidation, he hit upload.

IN THE WORDS OF FAMOUS MEN

I'm always writing you letters to explain myself, but I don't want to explain myself. There's nothing to explain, you're always there. I don't know what to do. You make me do things, say things, write things, cotton-mouthed in sick anticipation. The beauty & ugliness of life, blah-blah. Ungainly, obsessed. Love's just sparing the niceties till you put the boot in. I don't want to turn into just another doomed figure in literature. The way you look at me, eyes like loaded dice. People only buy what there is to choose from. You can't always win just by converting tactics into a verbal response. Who are you when I'm alone? If you throw intention to the wind, it's only so you can speak more deliberately. Even if I have no existence of my own doesn't mean I belong to you.

TIME SLOWED TO BE SEEN

"A lunatic is someone who prefers to become what's socially understood."
(Artaud)

THE BRIDE

In a corner like a cornered rat. Watching her. The way she takes off her top. The way the neon accepts the shape of her neck, as if radiating from within. Coming through the shadows, left breast cinched in her hands, a long dark nipple like something cauterised. Shadows making a leopard-print mask of her face. And those eyes, hungry as a camera's.

LIFE REWARDS PERSISTENT EFFORT

It is sure as day follows night, that if a man climbs far enough up his own arse, eventually he'll discover the proverbial light at the end of the tunnel.

PEACE ON EARTH

The countdown runs out, cross-hatching into horrors.
Before the beginning.
Skin-crawls out of cosmic gulfs.
Brand-names, jargons, triggers.
Arrives at Year Zero.
Now that the human race is virtually brain-dead.
Phosphorescent slime.

Gives rise to the dreary paradoxes. She "remembered" writing The Ghost [of Corporations Past]. Archaic, belonaing to someone else entirely. In another place, another time, The sense of oppression persisted. Caged in time by an alien power. Mankind's oldest recorded thoughts. In the immediate aftermath. Took several decades to surface. A spy in someone else's body. Turns towards the sun. Time-war tactics, binding themselves, Initiatory beings, familiars, door-keepers, As night rigidifies. On the outside it worked as a cover-up. Walking ground inside a mind-construct. Finger-tapping blindmen. If time-travel ever happens, it always does. Picturephone, Motion holography.

MARE TRANQUILITATIS

He spoke on a high intellectual plane, guaranteed to pass right over the heads of every badge-wearing midget in town.

Great waves of curling nimbus sweep under & over in turbulent fury.

PAYPHONE

It was a hot humid September night when it all started coming undone. She appeared like a ghost, midnight hair & pale moon-flesh.

It might've been a dream only it wasn't. Nursing a comedown in a one-room Žižkov flop, thinking of nothing but the next fix.

There was a payphone a block away. If I'd got there, maybe everything wld've turned out differently. But I never made it past the door.

She was standing on the far side of the landing, half-dressed in shadows, as if she'd been waiting there for me. Maybe she had.

THIS STORY HAS NEVER BEEN FULLY TOLD

It was like listening to nothing but cover versions, day & night, day & night.

THE NEXT INSTALMENT

Zamyatin hadn't made his appearance at half-past three, nor even at four. Kid Katyusha grew nervous, went out & walked away mechanically. For some time she wandered without aim. She paused in the middle of the square, on the bridge, & at each of the crossroads facing certain houses. Finally she went into a tattoo parlour to rest. She watched the passers-by w/out interest. She scarcely noticed the noise of the tattooing machines. She felt strained & restless, & at the same time an extraordinary craving for solitude. She longed

to be alone & to give herself up quite passively to this debilitating emotion w/out seeking to escape from it.

I WAS CHARLES MANSON BEFORE HE WAS

"A punk is a young no-count piece of shit." (W.S.B.)

BORN THIS WAY?

The individual is indeed an IT. A manufactured abstract entity. To which may be added the unwelcome observation that all the ancillary activities of the "productive" individual are in reality designed to obscure that fact (from itself first of all) that it is devoid of an independent existence. In the purview of this pseudo-critical technocracy, the individual's existence is a purely procedural existence. Reduced to a vocabulary of empty actions, exclusively orientated towards the labour of consumption, such an existence remains exiled from of an emancipative poetics. Crucially, the individual doesn't experience this exile as a loss, since every form of affirmation it encounters distracts it from its inability to live critically — which is to say, concretely. The image of the "self-realised" individual in this scenario, is thus one of an ideal producer of its own alienation. The greater its efficiency in production, the greater its reward in mandated freedoms. Such are the heroes of the socalled post-ideological classless society.

The illusion is to believe that the *individual* can be otherwise w/out violating every aspect of its world — since the individual & the world it belongs to are indeed a myth. Which is to say, *ideological to their* very core. There is no "natural" individual, just as there is no "natural" world to which the individual belongs. To conceive of a *different world*, of the world in a *different sense*, is not to "let be" — as if it were merely a question of sinking back into the warm primordial waters. In every respect, laissez-faireism is the negation of emancipative thought. It masks not only the essentially alienated character of individual existence, but an ever more deceptive, more paradoxical alienation, arising precisely from the individual's misdirected struggle against alienation — a struggle which is only ever against some disfigured spectre of "itself."

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

CHINA SYNDROME

Confucius takes Mao Zedong's red fist all the way up his maggoty posterior a Nobel Prize-winning performance.

FEMALE TROUBLE

Slavomira was sitting on a couch & I was sitting on a chair & there was a huge bouquet of flowers & we were just staring at each other through the flowers & we weren't saying a word. Finally Slavomira cldn't help herself & started unbuttoning her blouse. Before I cld do anything she had her breasts out & was licking her nipples, one after the other. They were so dark. Like chocolate. Then she looked at me as if to say, "taste them." And right at that moment the vase w/ the flowers fell over & milk spilled out everywhere.

ESCAPE WASN'T AN OPTION

Seeing instead the others, coming out of the blue light w/ handcuffs. Car door slamming. Chewing vinyl. Streetlights cascading through the windows as the city slid by.

THE TIME THE S.V.E.J.K. WERE RIGHT

Papa Walt's head is in the mirror. Tzara runs to the desert island, a volcanic eruption has destroyed it & Papa Walt, riding on a small mole's back, makes obscene signs to him & pushes forward a huge prick on which Tzara embarrasses himself by wiping his feet.

FLASHBACK

"How to know which is left & which is right, & what's the meaning of everything else between?"

Cuntisha sat at the table on the terrace reading a script, one hand beneath the table lazily probing her crotch $\mathbf{w}/$ the end of a pencil. The film was one of those "political conscience" period pieces, shot mostly from the waist up.

Her jejune politico w/ a neatly waxed moustache sat opposite, eating from an egg cup. As soon as the director called CUT Bouzid pushed the jejune politico out of the way & took his chair.

People in period costumes climbed the nether stair-head at rehearsed intervals, a dark intimation of conferring presences.

The inter-title tells us it's 1938.

Zamyatin hunched gloomily over the playback. A lip-reader wld've discerned "worthless," "complete trash."

Directly behind him a gap in the scenery opened, where the rhododendron hedge was just exceeded by the balustrade, a curiously trapezoid figure. Next to it a sign informed that breakfast was daily served at eight. A waiter in a tall paper hat appeared beneath a tall plastic linden tree bringing a tall coffee pot on a tray, fake croissants & fake imported marmalade.

"One experiences at a subtle remove, defined by a single word..."
Cuntisha said.

Her script lay open at the last page on which she'd pencilled notes. She was a fastidious note-taker. Bouzid poured some coffee as Cuntisha continued reading aloud:

"The depression & hopelessness of those soon to be exterminated en mass." "Brayo." he said, measuring out the sugar.

The politico re-appeared, this time in uniform, to take his place as before. By now it was after the war, the guarantine had been in place for ten days.

As the camera zooms in on his face we recognise it's really the Lazarine under a thick layer of makeup.

Buzid stared morosely at his coffee as he got up to make way:

"Well what the hell am I supposed to do w/ this, now? It'll be cold before they even get to Nuremberg!"

LA PESTE

"They were Humanists," Camus said. "They disbelieved in the Plaque. The Plague," he waived his hand so as to convey to his listeners a sense of ennui, "isn't a thing made to man's measure. Therefore," he arimaced, "they told themselves that the Plague was a mere bodey of the mind, a bad dream that'd pass away. But it didn't pass away &, from one bad dream to another, it was men who passed away, & the Humanists first of all, because they didn't take precautions." Camus gazed out at the sprawling ruin of a city. The blackened Tower. The collapsed Bridge. The permanent veil of smoke & teargas. He shruaged expressively, "Our citizens weren't more to blame than others, they iust forgot to be modest, that's all. They thought everything was still possible for them – which presupposed that the Plaque was impossible. They went on doing business, arranging for journeys, & forming opinions. How could they've given the slightest thought to anything like the Plague, which by definition rules out any future, cancels journeys, silences the exchange of opinions? They fancied themselves free." Camus paused for effect. "But no-one will ever be free," shook his head sadly. "as long as there's the Plaque."

HISTORY SUCKED INTO A VORTEX

At the other end of which was a gnome eating a bowl of noodles. Each noodle represented a dimension in time.

TOO HOT TO TANGO

The scenery melted into air. Empty hunger crosses the sky, records fixed nature of absolute need, voice fading into advocate, a whole replaced history of life burial (how familiar will be the end product?) & to separate this from the smell of time, come from the dark street.

"I told him you died out down the scale on this green-backed land, the twisted dollar signs to light a last cigarette, & last words answer you who took shape as though of yr own volition, begging, in effect, for penance, though by no distinct means such immodesty to speak of, if it culminate in sin mortal or venal, etc."

The partisans produce recordings ahead in time. But this will only make sense if perceived from the correct point of view, seen as the camera sees it & as it officiates in the minds of the populace. Kid Katyusha stands in silhouette against the burning city. She doesn't tell them of her underground activities, & shadowed through convolutions to be left under a stone (unturned): it is WITHIN her that the conflict will take place, condemned & resurrected in the same foul breath.

AT THE SAME TIME AS SHE SET DOWN HER EXPERIENCES

The Lazarine got to her feet & Cuntisha took her by the wrist, leading her over to a full-length, three-sided mirror. There she applied red lipstick to her lips. The Lazarine noticed that the colour darkened as it dried. W/ the same red, Cuntisha painted her nipples, & then the lips of her sex...

"You have no choice. If you do not do every single thing I tell you to, I will kill you."

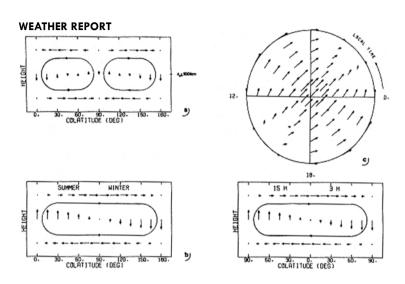
A CURIOUS UNCHARACTERISTIC SENSE OF URGENCY

Zamyatin faded in & out of consciousness. At some point he awoke & found Kid Katyusha watching solicitously over him. She kept running her hand across his forehead, which was drenched w/ sweat. Every now & then the sick man tried to stand up but immediately fell down again. He raved deliriously. His camera lay broken on the floor. Bits of shattered glass & black plastic. Pixels streamed in psychedelic disarray across the viewfinder. Zamyatin didn't look like he was going to last much longer, Kid Katyusha surmised. He was dying & he wldn't be able to film it unless she found him another camera. But if the world was ending anyway, what difference wld it make?

THE FUTURE ALREADY HAPPENED

like science fiction, like a highrise slotmachine stuck in the sky, like a snarf ablact in a jetstream, like recordbreaking boxoffice appeal, like a voice speaking JUST TO YOU, like Holy Moses! like Sveikism zapping out of that auy's brain sitting next to you on the nighttram, like a whorehouse piano player on pervitin, like Captain Ahab's Cab Company stepping up their turbothrusters, like a skull wide awake on a pile of bones, like a flame-out over the USSR, like an asterisk in place of an arsehole, like Democracy in an S&M parlour, like a cattleprod marinated in clam oil, like filiareed Habsburg dentistry blown to bits by a 12-bore, like a roulette wheel on the Schwartzchild radius, like a chemically-preserved pre-natal neurosis, like a portal into the Great Instauration, like a typewriter w/a suitcase inside it, like a sheerness of mist, like a mob gathering outside yr door, like an escapee in slowmotion, like a police standoff, like the very last thing you can remember before not waking up, like Paul Klee's "Red Balloon" breaking the sound barrier, like the skin of someone's teeth, like a fission reactor for a defibrillator, like a tyrannical ego snorting teargas, like Perikles expelling the barbarians from Gallipoli, like a fuck in minus-forty-dearees Fahrenheit, like a man swinging an axe, like an eight-ball finding the wrong pocket, like invisible filaments crowding her mouth, like a stretch limo plunging from the Empire State Building, like a reformed virgin in a convent, like the Magic Mountain at the bottom of the sea, like a Wunderwaffe w/a subwoofer. like an Encyclopaedia Britannica jettisoned into outer-space, like a dwarf in a party hat, like pitchblend all over the Shanks Armitage. like Planet X in the rearriew mirror, like severance pay to an amputee, like dollarsucking suit-whores on a ten-day binge, like the point at which time loses meaning because nothing happens there, like the haemoglobin in a pair of rose-tinted alasses, like a double-adaptor for a three-way pile-up, like a rat-trap to a king's ransom, like every exit sign in every cinema on Earth exploding in synchronicity, like tax reform, like riding to the moon on a bicycle w/ training wheels, like psychic surgery performed by a robot, like a soap opera on a soapbox, like authentic leopard-skin upholstery, like a dog's eye in bad blood, like resembling the only other person in this room, like an Egyptian sarcophagus w/wings, like a contortionist pigmy stuck inside yr ear, like tinned nits, like scalping a wig-artist, like a virtual ROM the size of the Colosseum, like a suicidal machine strung-out on Zoloft, like black acid poured all over the page, like fascism w/out the low points, like Stefan Zweig doing the Madison, like Idi Amin doing the Kubla Khan, like a

dorsal hippocampus boiled in a jar, like an end that cldn't come too soon, like image-eugenics to a blindman, like Kepler's pentagonal universe in reverse, like an android nailed to the wrong crucifix, like a colostomy bag in zero gravity, like a symphony of plague rats, like an Indian summer that comes around the back way to put the chill on you, like a sardine alone in a tin, like the autistic who has all yr thoughts memorised, even this one.



A SOCIOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO THE EFFECTS OF HALLUCINOGENIC SUBSTANCES ON RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

- I met Jesus on an acid trip.
- What was Jesus doing on an acid trip, brother?
- Meeting the people, man, meeting the people.

DISILLUSIONMENT IS LIKE THE FIRST SPOON OF A COLD SOUP

The alienation of emancipative thought isn't dissociable from the alienation of the individual: constituted in its subjectivity as the very figure of alienation, the individual stands in a mirroring relation to the alienated constitution of its world. Thus it is the character of this relation that determines the scope of its possibility as consciousness. There is no simple opposition between consciousness or emancipative thought & alienation as such. This stems from the fact that alienation, as constitutive of experience, is fundamentally ambivalent: it determines the possibility of experience, not the terms of experience. Likewise it determines the possibility of the individual, not the terms of its existence; nor that of its world; nor that of the operations of power within that world.

The apparent impasse of the question of emancipation is the impasse of a system in which abstraction is both primordial & transcendent. But it isn't mere romanticism that informs the desire to encapsulate life in a single adventure. The delegation of life, on the other hand, on the premise that experience "robbed of authenticity" isn't worth the price of admission, denies the fact that inadmission is out of the question. Likewise the tired excuse, that "everything has already been done." Yet such is the self-concealed optimism of the fatalist: existence is not w/out its precedents. Evolution, which has much to teach about historical materialism, proceeds w/ all the ineluctable chaos of entropy — such that the movement of history courses w/ probabilities whose "outcomes" are indeed indeterminate, whose perturbations bear the potential to catastrophically destabilise any prospective future & the systems erected to fortify the claims of power upon it.

To speak of "abstract inauthenticity" is to stand w/ your back to the precipice of the world & call it the End of History. It is a clock stopped at three-minutes-to-midnight. It is the spectre of a world that cannot be dreamt. But what is that world? When those who day-after-day produce alienation against themselves are no longer capable of appropriating it for themselves, existence itself comes to appear as nothing more than an abstraction of abstraction. Yet emancipative thought isn't a furtive nostalgia.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

THE PASSAGE OF TIME, THE VANITY OF THINGS, THE ETERNAL TRUTH

Oh the offended masses! Life isn't a friend, it isn't the beloved. One day all this will magically disappear, as History promised it wld. Every possible terrain, as if their G.O.D. had merely hallucinated it. The village idiots, the sweating sky, the sacred mental disorders. Thus have I found happiness, w/out taking even one step towards you. Men of conscience will say: Nothing less! It's time to wash yr hands, before locking their cages. Great destinies forgive everything, except the child who sets off each day w/out a weapon.

DO SUCH IDIOTS REALLY EXIST?

My dear cretins, yr realism was never in doubt!

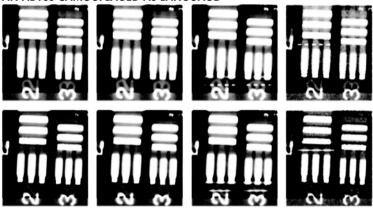
THE LAZARINE'S RECURRENT DREAM

Everyone gathers at the window, watching the dark body of the river as night falls. Pigeons squatting beneath the eaves of the same roof as the night before. A ship's bell sounds & everyone hurries to leave. As the Lazarine, alone, starts towards the gangway she hears Cuntisha call to her. In the background a chamber orchestra clutches their violins & oboes, quavers, semi-quavers, demi-semi-quavers. A tired concert piece nobody is listening to. The Lazarine's dress slips from her shoulders & reveals the festering skeleton beneath. As if on cue, Cuntisha begins kicking & tormenting her like a dog. She makes the Lazarine crawl up to her & kicks her again.

PLOT REDEVELOPMENT

The wheelchair was where Kid Katyusha had left it, but the Kraut bastard was gone. She pulled a Heckler&Koch MP5 from her backpack & surveyed the possible escape routes. The Kraut had been zip-tied to the chair, but the plastic ties were still in place — only the Kraut was gone. It gave her the creeps, like some highly unnatural deal had been transacted there. Houdinistyle voodoo shit. She sighted along the barrel, scanned, one corridor at a time, one doorway at a time.

AN ABYSS CAMOUFLAGED AS LANGUAGE



"THE ESSENTIAL FEATURE OF THE MIND IS LIBERTY" (HEGEL)

Fewer & fewer were resisting. In the face of certain defeat, the collaborators among them had gone. "Society is forever crumbling," their prophets said, "the best we can do is help it on its way." Wherever we found them, we shot them like dogs.

THE CULTURAL ARCANA OF LATE CAPITALISM

The Siamese sun & moon wheel in pathological unison till splitting apart. Laughter?

Dead in life by machine cunning, "determined" by the xor switch, & if (cld we become part of the array)?

Some inner "subject" transcribing the image & character of this strident illiterate rubbish. Poison in jest!

These recent eclipses, très symboliste, draped in borrowed cerements la femme d'un certain âge (it's the Lazarine, of course, in her preferred rôle) w/her prognosis read out of hearing in the Doctor's sanctum — the Doctor has such green fingers, a true botanical, stinking of pig shit.

"Oh but how does yr garden grow?" he twisted the ends of his moustache

(no longer a sculptural form in space but site of floridly dubious prepresentations) & was that *laughter* again echoing in the surgery responding to the ear eye mouth nearest to hand? As her neck snaps, a thin S, providing the circumstance to evoke their overture, so artlessly. Violas, violins. As the sibilant old fairy applies his tongue to the Lazarine's flatulent arse w/ a necrophiliac's tenderness. Sincerity had always been his flaw.

As the crisis approaches, the Lazarine flushes his beard w/ the miraculous broken waters (spilling around his feet, & what happened consequently, according to the director's notes, "sets everything on edge").

ABRACADABRA, MAO ZEDONG, CHE GUAVARA

"Give up yr liberty & everything will be returned to you," G.O.D. said.

ANTHROPOCENE

In the glass dome nature has been imitated, more or less perfectly, in all things.

THE BOOGIE MAN DID WHAT THE WOOGIE MAN CLDN'T?

Cuntisha approaches, looking down at Bouzid's shiny, dirty black trousers that haven't been changed in weeks. She can sense the static behind his eyes when he looks at her. He has the general appearance of something which didn't come to pass under the spell of necessity & which may well not have come to pass at all.

"You are," Bouzid groaned, "a heartless bourgeois sociopath."

"Don't be an idiot," she replied, gabbing a fistful of his hair, "death passes through you every day & every night."

The hair, what there was of it, was greasy to touch, scummed w/ ancient dandruff. His projecting forehead resembled a canopic jar.

"For that matter," he groaned more persuasively, "what goes around may as well be called a noose."

At moments like this, he decided, Cuntisha had a sinister beautiful face. He suddenly ached for her to throw up all over his skinny carcass.

THE FICTIONAL VERSION IS THE REAL ONE

"What you write," she said, "has to actually happen."

THE SECRET LIVES OF INSECTS

The incontrovertible nonentity Tristan Tzara awoke one morning from empty dreams to find himself lying in a shoebox, transformed into a tiny homunculus Papa Walt. He knew this instinctively — it'd been his constant fear that one day Papa Walt wild inflict some such evil upon him, yet — perversely — he had secretly desired it also. Indeed, there were times when he had become convinced he himself was Papa Walt & that his nemesis was nothing but an impostor. He raised his head a little & by the light of a match stared down the length of his pitifully thin body, at his poliomyelitic legs & his tapered leathery black feet. His head, by contrast, felt enormous — as enormous as the head

of a hydrocephalic baby clinging to the side of a giant syringe — a syringe half a mile long, raised vertically against a black doom-laden sky — a doomladen sky that was very black indeed. He cldn't shake this bizarre image from his mind. Then the match burned his fingertips & flickered out. He squinted. blinked blindly one Polyphemus eye, Squinted w/ the other & blinked again. But all was darkness, "Papa Walt has done this to me!" he screeched hopelessly. But of course no-one cld hear him. Tzara had no way of knowing. but his shoebox was buried beneath a pile of upended filing cabinets in the cellar of a building the Interior Ministry had abandoned ten years before. Somewhere nearby a rat twitched its nose, recoiled in disgust, & slouched off to forage elsewhere. Abandoned by an uncaring universe. Tzara lay in the dark pretending he was invisible & that by consequence his predicament was nothing but a figment w/no foundation in reality. At some point before drifting back into the void of sleep, he muttered to himself, "It is I, Papa Walt, who am in fact dreaming you — whereas when you awake, you will have been transformed into an insect, & I, I shall be the greatest artist in the world!"

I AM SIMPLY TRANSCRIBING — WORD FOR WORD — THE EVENTS AS REPORTED TO ME BY THOSE WHO SAW W/ THEIR OWN EYES

Two idiots found a shoebox by the roadside.

One of them picked it up & straightaway started rubbing the lid, like it was Ali Baba's magic lamp.

The second idiot watched him for a while, then said:

"You expecting a bloody genie to pop out, or what?"

"Nah," replied the one rubbing the shoebox, "I'm doing this coz I'm an idiot."

THE SOCIAL BODY

People walking around, driving, whatever, totally oblivious, w/ one hand clamped to their ears like their arm's growing out of their fucking heads, talking to themselves. Out loud. You see what I'm saying? It was like they'd all gone nuts, every last one of 'em. Walking around holding their ears & talking to themselves. Like zombies or something. Talking to themselves. Out loud!

COLD CONSOLATION

The Lazarine spread her knees wide, having done w/ explaining, one leg over each arm of the chair. Obligingly they all came closer for a better look.

"Baroque, la bella figura!" Bouzid exclaimed.

"Manson Family," sneered Cuntisha. "Heaven's Gate, Brazalian snakeworshippers, the Virgin Mary, ancient Tibetans, glass-plate ectophotography, Harry Houdini, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Madam Blavatsky..."

"Ít only goes to show," Slavomirá opined, "the 'ineffable' you hear so much about is only an alibi."

"Like the sort of place only poets venture," Cuntisha giggled, "w/ closed eyes & wagging tongues."

Bouzid took out a pare of surgical gloves & scissors & began cutting around the impediment. The pink flesh parted & fell away, kept for a

keepsake in formalin solution.

In the morning when she awoke, there was a square of light cast on the ceiling like a curtain behind a windowpane, like an innermost wish: to want the impossible, the inconceivable. She reached for the glass of water beside her bed. It was warm & she spat it back out. When she put the glass down again, there was a crack in it, the water had turned red. She cried out, realising her lip had been cut by the cracked glass.

STOP IT, OR YOU'LL GO BLIND (BOHUMIL HRABAL)

"Just like I used to come here to see all you pretty young things, I used to go to church to perv at my honeys & get a stroke on in my trouser pocket, harhar, well, not exactly to church, I'm not much for repentin' my good deeds, har-har, but to a little junkshop next to the baptistery, a rat-hole of a joint, where this old lush by name of Hans Spankmejster, har-har, sold vintage film reels, before anyone called 'em 'vintage' & all them yuppies started buyin' everything up for speculation, but these dusty reels were just good ol' fashion nudie flicks, har-har, got lost under the floorboards of the projection room at the Tivoli Theatre, before it got torn down..."

AN HOURGLASS DRIPPING TARMAC

"Am I to blame for all this?" Kid Katyusha asked herself, almost unconscious of her words.

Towards six o'clock she found herself at the freightyards. Solitude had soon become unbearable.

WE ARE SLAVES, BUT WE ARE IN LOVE

Slavomira turned her face:

"I felt the cold fly moving between my fingers," she said aloud to the room, "& the soft crunch as I delicately crushed the head to avoid a haemorrhage of maggots & blood."

When Bouzid came in several hours later he was struck by the studied manner in which she was sitting there doing absolutely nothing. He had the sudden impression that she saw the whole thing as some kind of movie in which she was starring. Right then, she was playing someone alone in a room.

"Well," said Bouzid, looking across at her. "What is it?"

Staring at him w/ wide blank eyes, Slavomira replied:

"We have to talk. Sidi. Say somethina!"

Finally she let the dead fly drop to the floor, spinning like a dry leaf. She felt completely at the mercy of the mad doctor, Bouzid the All-Powerful. These powers, by their nature, were of an order that was moral & social. They had their roots in the status of the mad & in the alienation of their character, rather than their minds. Did thinking this mean she was mad, too? A psychiatric case always has a beginning: perhaps an identifiable cause, often contained within an event or a word. Bouzid had crossed the room. Slavomira, unable to turn her head, lost sight of him. Invisible forces seemed to be acting to maintain control of her body. (How can I act naturally, she thought, when I'm nobody anyway. Anything to do w/ emotions is cruel or a fake. I cut

myself & don't feel anything. Is that what love is? I'm sick of expectations. You expect something, but you're really empty. You want to fill the holes up but they don't exist you only think they do.) She sensed Bouzid standing behind her now. Suddenly she became acutely aware of his hands, which she cld neither see nor feel, but suspected.

"Don't touch me!" she hissed. "The wall's are full of ghosts. Can't you see we're in a theatre? The space where the audience should be is steeply tiered. Everything's white. But when you scratch at the white w/yr fingernails & it's just paint. It comes away, & all that's underneath it is glass. I'm afraid of moving because then it might shatter."

SHAKEY DICK'S LOVE EMPORIUM

Halloween fright-masks, nurses' outfits, gimp-suits, harnesses, riding crops, ankle-cuffs, nipple-clamps, ball-gags, & rows & rows of pink made-in-China plastic, rubber, latex, polyurethane dildos, buttplugs, penis extensions, cockrings, treasure chests, blow-up dolls & those suction falsie jobs you were meant to stick yr peenie into — the very thought made Biff cringe, huddled at the checkout every night watching the freaks cruise the shelves, fingers itching in their pockets. What Belespon Joe said, about it just not being his métier, cut-out for something better of course.

A BED IS A BED IS A BED

in a hotel room in a prison cell in a barracks on top of a truck in a tent in a sauat in a homeless shelter under a bus in a rented apartment in a brothel in a flophouse on a space station in a hospital in a refugee camp under a bridae in a phonebooth in a processina centre in a bunker beside a train line in a garage in a basement in a stormwater drain under a lean-to in a psych ward in a doorway in a palace

on a subway vent in an airport in a tin shack under a tree in a test centre in a workhouse in the back of a car

ANATOMY OF AN IMAGE

The sky in post-mortem lividity. Zamyatin's hand shook as he attempted to trace the outlines that hovered so clearly in the air before him, projecting themselves, as through a camera lucida, on the white walls of the room. Nothing seemed to join up to cover the white surface beneath. White was invading the picture from all sides. For a moment he thought someone else was in the room. Someone murmured in his ear. It sounded like Kid Katyusha. He wanted to touch her hand but he was too weak to make it real. The sound of her voice comforted him. She was telling him a story about someone lying half-awake at night, in a cold fever, unable to sleep, but also unable to think: he'd fallen into a blackhole, he cldn't see that the universe in which he'd existed was escaping him, that another, opposite universe, was swallowing him up.

BLACKHOLE



THE VIOLENCE OF THE MORALLY WEAK ISN'T EQUIVALENT TO VIOLENCE OF THE POWERLESS

It is a false assumption that the contest over the future course of the world consists in totalitarianism versus democracy — as if it were a question not of the quantity, but the quality of the blood either has on its hands. There are many who confuse manufactured consent w/ emancipation; the corporate body w/ the social body. But real democracy isn't a ceremony of the permitted, purchased at elections scheduled by the state (even by a "dissident" section within the state). Nor is totalitarianism a gimp making a one-armed salute while cyborgs march the goosestep, but the global orchestration of cash registers synchronized to the operations of "his & her" hard & soft power. Between them is the photogenic love affair of people w/ beautiful teeth.

The nature of capitalist planning & control is that it is historically conducted on sporadic & discontinuous initiatives, within & between which its influence, due to a pervasive self-interest & internal competition, remains often tenuous, amounting at times to little more than a confidence trick that is always (& ultimately only) guaranteed by the intervention, on its behalf &

against society, of corporate-state power. The internally combative character of the corporate state — which (defined by competition & the profit incentive) is the true ideological locus of its oppressive instinct — is also its point of decisive weakness. Capitalism, at its core, lacks a clearly defined ideological compass, since its sole orientation is accumulation — in other words, self-propagation — which it seeks to accomplish in a schizophrenic manner of self-regulated, self-competition. It is therefore susceptible to precisely those ambivalences upon which the possibility of abstraction, exchange-value, commodity, virtuality, & all other modes of "capital" are produced, & by which its hegemony has extended into the properly ideological sphere, as the generalised possibility of "all" discourse. It is, in effect, the manifestation of the dream of totalities: in it, like an enchanted mirror, ideology perceives its ultimately accomplished end.

It is here that subversive action finds its counterpart in the internal discontinuities of power, It is here. & here alone, that subversion — more than a mere play of words — is capable of appropriating the fallibilities of totalitarian discourse. Yet, for the same reasons, it is here that the corporate state is also most porous & thus most adapted to the work of expropriation & re-integration, even if only in a delayed reaction. Subversive action cannot negate what here amounts to an inevitability — since the work of expropriation — of its forms, its outward appearance, even its tactics — is always only a matter of time. On the contrary, the nature of subversive action is that it must, at any moment, be capable of sacrificing, w/out the slightest hesitation, what only appears to belong to it. It is antithetical to subversion to attempt the occupation of territory or the consolidation of supposedly "material gains," which in reality will have already begun to assume the form of property. Against the seductions of its own reification. & in the face of expropriative inevitability, subversive action must always be prepared to re-invent itself rather than defend that which amounts to a shadow of its actual purpose.

To stake everything on the defence of mere artefacts of subversive action is to court unconditional defeat: it is the nostalgia of a temporary accomplishment soon to be definitively overwhelmed, blinded to a task whose force stems from the fact that it is w/out end. When the future is in the balance, defensive logic is the logic of a reactionary sentimentalism. Only by a constant strategy of surprise "panic attacks" & tactical retreats can subversive action retain, in addition to its material impact, a fully symbolic potential — as the signpost to a possible future, rather than as a signpost to defeatism. Defeated action is the action of the "unbearable burden of history": it is farce misrecognising itself as tragedy.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

WHAT MAKES A THING INVISIBLE?

Kid Katyusha let her peripheral vision do the work, edging through the blackness. Something shifted in silhouette, black on black. She dropped & sighted. It was too big to be the Kraut. It shifted again. She double-tapped the Heckler&Koch. Flame leapt from the silencer. A heavy grunt & heavier weight of something slamming into a wall.

She repositioned. Nothing. Counted. At thirty-six she heard something dragging itself along the floor. She grabbed her torch & flipped it on. A

suit w/ half its chest-cavity excavated lay sprawled at the foot of a bloody smear that ran up the wall.

Meanwhile the Kraut was scrabbling w/ one arm while the second clutched at some sort of box. She advanced, pinning the Kraut in the light, bloodshot eyes bulging stupidly up at her. The box he was holding was pink w/ a cellophane window. INFLATABLE ALMA MAHLER DOLL was printed on it in bold lettering.

Kid Katyusha thumbed back the hammer & the Kraut became still. Child's play, she told herself.

A COLLABORATIONIST'S GUIDE TO SELF-DEFENESTRATION

Look out the window. Bohumil Hrabal.

SEARCH FOR EMOTIONAL TRUTH

Slavomira turned at random to page 459 of the 1901 edition of *Gray's Anatomy* & read: "The membrane only partially covers the superior vena cava & the four pulmonary veins, & scarcely covers the interior cava, as this vessel enters the heart almost directly after it has passed through the diaphragm. Its inner surface is smooth & glistening, & secrets a serous fluid, which serves to facilitate the movements of the heart." Directly above this text was a drawing, depicting the front view of the thorax, w/ the ribs & sternum represented in relation to the lungs, heart & other internal organs, including the pulmonary orifice, aortic orifice, left auriculo-ventricular orifice & the right auriculo-ventricular orifice. On the page facing was a diagram in black & white, depicting the pericardium from behind, indicating the positions of the right pulmonary artery, the left subclavian artery, the left common carotid artery, the inferior thyroid vein, the vena azygos major & the right pulmonary veins.

LIFE LESSONS IN THE SCHOOL FOR CONFORMISTS

Beside him Cuntisha was bawling her eyes out laughing & sobbing like an hysteric...

"Well?" she asked finally. "Are you going to beat me too?" Bouzid was silent. He wanted to leave, to be far away.

"I want you to beat me!" She slapped him across the face, kept slapping him, screaming like an imbecile. "Don't you want to beat me too, you lousy shit?"

The walls began to teeter over him & her voice grew into something hideous, inhuman. She slapped him again, dug her nails into his cheeks, spat in his eyes. She cried. She bit him on the neck. She was falling apart.

CITY OF DREAMS

From earliest childhood she'd dreamt of being chased by monkeys. In her dream, she ran around in circles trying to escape them. The more she ran, the more monkeys there'd be chasing her. Soon the ground became steeper & she'd find herself running in a circle up an incline, which then became a stairway, which then became a hill, a tower, a mountain, an enormous dead

city spiralling up, then one city stacked upon another in tiers, the uppermost spires & minarets piercing the clouds. Each city had a name. Etemenanki, Babylon of black diorite, Cahokia, Angkor, Heracleion, Merv, Pompeii, Muziris, Troy. Each had fallen victim first to pestilence, then to flame, then to colossal stupidity.

KID KATYUSHA IN A FUTURE LIFE

W/ a heavy calibre machine gun slung low across her hips, the Kid fired wildly into the barracks, screaming revolutionary gobbledegook. Glass & wood splintered from window frames. Horsehair stuffing spilled from shredded bunk beds. Bloodless sheets & shattered store mannequins.

"We was double-crossed!" she screamed, before taking a clean hit right between the eyes.

One bullet, one kill was their motto, & that's how the Kid copped out.

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER

The motorised wheelchair spun in circles, veered up the ramp, then hoisted onto its back wheels & brodied off the steps. Buzik slammed the joystick into reverse & bucked left, then hit full throttle, fishtailing it through a sea of mud before laying into a hard right, spraying crap all up the depot wall. It was Jackson Pollock meets NYC subway c1979. It was Evil Kenevil meets Doctor Strangelove. Take yr pick. Buzik came out of a long speedway slide & wrenched the chair around for another circuit. He'd ride that sucker ALL THE WAY, or till the battery carked it, or the wheels gave out. Whichever came first.

PARANOID POLIS

And this susceptibility, concluded the Doctor, leads both to beneficial & to evil results.

TENSION W/OUT RESOLUTION

Wernher huddled on the floor, watching the sick man warily. The sick man lay on a pallet across the room, swathed in chiaroscuro. Candle-butts flickered on the concrete in a puddle of wax. Kid Katyusha stood guard at the door, pointing a handheld video camera. After she caught up w/ the Kraut trying to drag himself to the fire-escape at the back of the depot waving a spent Luger, she'd tied a rope ground him & dragged him all the way back, to the crib where she'd discovered Zamyatin not long before, It was barely more than a rat hole. She figured he'd gone there to die. Under the freightyards was one big catacomb. The whole S.V.E.J.K. Central Committee cld be found distributed among the sub-basement alcoves, blackened to the bone, like relics-in-waiting. The Kraut babbled stupidly till she'd shoved the Heckler&Koch in his mouth & after that he just smiled ruefully at her. She figured him for one of those after-work S&M types who spends over the premium for the kind of humiliation the working class get given for free eight hours-a-day-plus-overtime. For his part, Wernher understood merely that he was expected to play some sort of role. Expiation, perhaps. A scapegoat for Papa Walt. Something. His brain was no longer able to compute.

The sick man's grating cough sounded more like retching. He seemed to be trying to force up his lungs. After each unavailing effort, he sank back on his pallet, utterly exhausted. Kid Katyusha fixed Zamyatin in the viewfinder, the black swelling clearly visible across his throat, like dead hands slowly strangling him. Now he raised himself again & stared straight at Wernher w/ a fixity more dismaying than the paroxysms that'd preceded it. The stare was oddly familiar. Wernher kept smiling. Finally, in a thin rasping voice, Zamyatin spoke.

"We blew it," he said.

The inflatable Alma Mahler doll lay unpacked at his feet, but said nothing.

MIRROR, MIRROR

G.O.D. stared desperately into the TV, but it was no use.

100 IMAGES OF YR PERFECT SELF

"Empty out the medicine cabinet in there & take that one."

She was doing as she'd been told. Then Bouzid said:

"Turn around now & look how beautiful I am!"

But under fluorescent lights & in the Doctor's fierce grip, it was more difficult than it sounded. Pink & white, beneath her upturned hospital tunic. The risk was the same as any surgery performed under general anaesthetic. You cld see them at work, infection spreading by integers, no-go zones, street names, police cordons. Eyes from the "before" to the "after" portraits.

CONCERNING INFECTED HOUSES & PERSONS SICK OF THE PLAGUE

You had no choice. You went places you cldn't always come back from.





A TIME TO BE BORN

Zamyatin was certain that was what he'd seen: Martian fucking canals. Then he must've woken up, coughing his lungs out. Barely able to coordinate his actions, Zamyatin groped through his pockets till he found the phial of green pills. Indiscriminately he swallowed one after another. In a while his eyes opened again of their own accord & took in the mess on the floor. He vaguely recognised the place he was in. A room, w/ brick walls, a cot bed & a steel writing desk. And on the desk, a broken camera. Wld he have to start again, or was this the end finally? He saw a hand appear, a very white one, w/ tattooed knuckles & the fingers spread abroad. He reached for it & rolled onto the floor. Word to the wise, my friend.

Wernher watched the dying man from the corner of the room the mad woman had left him tied up in. She'd left nothing to chance this time. He'd fallen asleep more than once, but each time he'd awoken, he'd found the dying man exactly as before. Then all of a sudden someone had begun shouting. The dying man was sitting upright, pointing at the ceiling, shouting about Martians, before the coughing made it impossible for him to shout any more.

Wernher was afraid the dying man was just a figment of his imagination. That he'd been put in cryogenic storage, like Papa Walt, years ago & this was all just a dream. Maybe the Plague was doing something to break through, telling him he was really dead. That he'd died already in 1977, maybe, June 16. The date had a ring to it. What the hell happened on June 16, 1977? It was a Thursday, wasn't it? He cld remember that much clearly.

He pictured a room, very different from this one, filled w/ mechanical toys, robots, gyroscopes, machines w/ their intrigue of power & squalor reduced to useless curiosities, shells w/ tubes & electrical wires spilling out — envisaging ancient geometers handing down grid-point to grid-point n-dimensional wormhole maps to be used on the return journey, if & when, mistaken for a child's empty exercise book filled w/ nothing but ruled lines, parallel to the observing eye but not of a proof that cld be derived w/out some deus ex machina creeping in somewhere along the line.

"Had these things once been aware of us?" he thought.

Zamyatin, unaware of Wernher's presence, tried to guess how long he'd been alone, but cldn't.

"How do I know you even exist?" he mumbled at himself. It was an idiotic idea, but he cldn't help thinking it. "All sins committed in me are forgiven."

The room stank of plague death & the rot after inundation, humid swamp vapours condensing on the walls. The innards of a dozen pill bottles lay scattered across the floor. W/out his being aware of it, dawn had crept upon them & already it was day. The diurnal forces in his blood called Zamyatin from his stupor once more. He glanced around the room with panicked eyes. Reached for the camera Kid Katyusha had set up beside him on a tripod to record the final moments. Lacking the strength, Zamyatin plunged sideways to the concrete, groping at air. He lay there, on his side now, a poisoned rat, seeing nothing, body knotting into itself.

"Whether you're... dead or not," he gagged, "the image's gone, but there remaineth writing."

He stared stupidly at his fingers. His hands weighed a tonne, he struggled to pick them up & hold them in one place, turn them over, scrutinised them. But after all, he had nothing to write with either.

"Well hallelujah, you cant judge a book by its story. And in a room like this, without even an interrogation desk. Really the dregs! I cld never be born here."

RESPONSIBLE BEHAVIOUR

You don't never trust a dead rat, kid. They is just as like to let you get within distance then spring a gimmick on you, sink their teeth in yr neck before you know, chew yr head clean off or maybe get a dose of incurable rabies, go berserk on Charles Bridge in front of the tourist trade, do some kinda irreparable damage to the GDP right there.

THE DISSOLUTION OF THE METAPHYSICS OF ALIENATION ISN'T A PURELY INTELLECTUAL TASK

Increasingly the world is reduced to the formulary: to live, or to tell? Social reality, distilled to a fleeting procession of memes under the dictatorship of the commodity, exiles the world of action to a domain of "false choices." The consumption of false choices is governed by two complementary principles:

- 1. Everything is permitted, therefore nothing is any longer possible;
- 2. The machinery of approval never sleeps.

What presents itself as an abundant plurality in fact obscures an austerity of meaning. Persistently invited to choose, we are forever distracted from the critical task of judgement: choice, which is no choice, becomes the panacea of conscience. The socalled "free agent," the individual supposedly free to choose, becomes the unwitting instrument of self-alienation. Yet deprived of its panacea, the world appears to it as an unbounded chaos of relativisms. In a vertigo of undecidability, the question, "What does it mean?" becomes, "What is it permitted to mean? What meaning am I permitted to find in it?"

To calculate, to narrow the probabilities, merely restores to this free-agent-who-isn't-free the "possibility" of its own failure — in the seemingly paradoxical form of choosing so as not to act, or acting so as not to choose. We consider these to be equivalent. The compulsion — to choose, to act — is simply the mirror of a primordial inertia: it is the expression of a paralysis in which existence is narrowed to mere reflex.

— THE Š.V.E.J.K.

OMO WHITENESS

The spin-cycle that changed the world!

IDEOLOGY FILLS HER IMMACULATE GROIN

Scene: 4:30a.m. Cuntisha shivered inside her coat.

"I'm too old," she murmured.

She sucked nervously on the end of her cigarette.

"Everything smells like shit."

The street turned towards the freightyards. To the left a narrow stairway down to the tracks.

"Why do I have to keep on seeing that hateful train?" she hissed.

He started to leave.

The low hum of fuseboxes seemed to put everything in a kind of trance. Cuntisha cried. She pressed her eyes w/ her knuckles & rocked the weight of her body back & forth on the bottom stair.

"You don't hate me too, do you?"

She frowned suspiciously. She was instinctively hostile to what she didn't understand.

IDENTIFYING MARKS

The shouts pursued her like horrible script doctors trapped in a rerun not of their making. Kid Katyusha weaved through the labyrinth. COULD THIS BE THE WALL THE LAST CAPITALIST WILL BE SHOT AGAINST?

No wall cld be long enough, she thought, stopping in front of it. An ant colony was conducting a civil war among the brickwork.

She took stock. There was blood all up & down her arms. The deadman's head waved lantern-like.

It was only when she'd gone back to the corpse & found a green \$ sign tattooed on his dick, that she'd recognised who it was. J. Adolph Wolfsbane, a.k.a. JAWS, the world's third biggest Nazi after Papa Walt & Hitler himself.

All she needed now was an upload connection. Put that motherfucker's dead face on every TV screen still out there receiving.

"DEMOCRATIC LIBERTY" OR "DEMOCRATIC TYRANNY"

He knows the words for I DO NOT SPEAK YR LANGUAGE, but they don't reassure him.

WE WHO ARE NOT THE OTHERS

Buzik eyed the Hobo warily. He seemed to be talking to himself, but there was no way of telling for sure. He sounded like an old carny attraction. Buzik huddled under the flyover clutching his BB gun while the Hobo mumbled & dug with a stick inside a hole in the embankment. From time to time he'd pause to chew on something he'd dislodged with his stick, then start digging again. Buzik could hardly make sense of the old Hobo's narrative. Something about a notorious midget ventriloquist, it sounded like, then the amazing story of Elephant Boy, the unusual amours of Crocodile Woman, the infamous Pinhead who inspired Verdi's *Rigoletto*, the tragedy of Monkey Girl & her invisible parasitic twin, the 34-inch dwarf who married a 264-pound hermaphrodite, the human torso who could sew, crochet & type, the man who ate trashcans, the blind chess-playing worm, the horse who could recite *Ulysses* & *L'il Abner* simultaneously.

"Well," the Hobo yawned, just when Buzik was getting interested. "Y'know where all them goddamn midgets come from, dontcha?"

BEWARE OF GREEKS BEARING GIFTS

Lightshift. Bouzid enters in lamé dinner jacket, smoking a robusto. Cuntisha stands beside him. Arm in arm they proceed towards the marble stairway.

In the corner of the room, having arrived as if out of nowhere via the emergency airlock, Kid Katyusha poses w/ her arms outstretched, a barbedwire wreath in her hair. Where did she come from? Where will she go? In one hand she holds the head of J. Adolf Wolfenstimmt, in the other a pink cellophane box, with the words INFLATABLE ALMA MAHLER DOLL printed on it. In this posture she resembles the awkwardness of an exotic plant.

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE CONTROL PROCESS

Camus at this stage in his life became haunted by the idea that he was an impostor, that everything he'd ever said or written was based on nothing. Growing old, he began to suspect that he himself didn't in fact exist, that he was simply the detached or repressed part, the guilty conscience, of others – whose presence he suspected, but whose identity he was never able to confirm. Eventually this idea got the better of him & he committed suicide in a fit of anguish & despair, by slashing his throat on the shards of a broken mirror.

"Just another goddamn cliché," sneered the morgue technician, tagging Camus for the freezer boys. He'd seen a few in his time, enough to pen a whole dissertation.

PUDDING & PIE

In a girlish voice Kid Katyusha sang:
"Doctor Sidi Bouzerant
screwed the girls & made them fart,
when the boys came out to play,
he screwed them too coz they were gay."

THE PUBLIC INQUEST

At first only the sound of an antique film projector punctuates the stillness. Then a brief struggle cld be heard. Bouzid & Cuntisha emerged from behind a curtain, struggling with the inflatable Alma Mahler doll. They dragged her to the bed. Bouzid positioned the doll's hands so they were at the outside edges of the bedhead & Cuntisha followed suit with the doll's feet. Quickly Slavomira chained both of the doll's wrists & ankles.

At that point, the Lazarine went to the stairhead w/a loudhailer & made an announcement to the whole motley crew, that "The hag known as Alma Mahler is about to be punished & everyone is duly invited to observe & lend their moral support."

Black&white film footage flickered across the walls, hundreds of faces looking straight at the camera. Soon a large crowd had amassed to witness THE PUNISHMENT OF THE INFLATABLE ALMA MAHLER DOLL.

Slavomira grabbed the inflatable Alma Mahler doll by the hair so everyone cld see the victim's face. She then announced to the audience that as her punishment, the inflatable Alma Mahler doll wld be force-fed a carp. When the inflatable Alma Mahler doll let out a wheezy mechanical scream a murmur of approval went up from the crowd. They heard Slavomira instruct the Lazarine to remove the flimsy garment from the inflatable Alma Mahler doll. The inflatable Alma Mahler doll was now entirely naked except for what

appeared to be a Cyprinus carpio protruding from between her large semi-flaccid buttocks.

Frequently bread in ponds & lakes, the Cyprinus carpio is an edible fresh water fish popular in Mitteleuropa particularly during the period leading up to Xmas Eve, when it is usually consumed in reverence w/potato salad.

"W/ so many people watching," the Lazarine later recalled, "I didn't want to look like a fool. I quickly got my hand around the tail of the fish & gave it a powerful wrench. The fish came out & it was large. I cldn't imagine how it found its way into the doll in the first place. I found myself unaccountably staring at the fish which I was holding, limply, by the tail. Its scales were covered w/ lubricating fluids & clearly showed that the inflatable Alma Mahler doll had tried to excrete during the afternoon."

Cuntisha, too, examined the fish &, apparently satisfied, ordered the inflatable Alma Mahler doll to eat it. When the inflatable Alma Mahler doll shook its head, Cuntisha became more insistent. She pushed Slavomira aside & grabbed the inflatable Alma Mahler doll by the hair, pulled her head back & tried to shove the fish down her throat. The inflatable Alma Mahler doll had locked her mouth shut & was determined not let the fish into her mouth.

The ever helpful Lazarine then stepped forward w/ an orthodontic device which appeared to be a large "O" attached to two black leather straps. The centre was empty. The periphery or circumference of the "O" was determined, as is most often the case, by its variable diameter multiplied by approximately 3.14159, & was made out of metal & had nasty little spikes radiating from the inner rim. It was clear that this device was meant to be inserted between the inflatable Alma Mahler doll's teeth & strapped behind her head. The rim extended approximately 2.5cm. Its spikes cld be expected to inflict pain upon the fleshy muscular organ attached to the floor of the oral cavity.

Slavomira, meanwhile, seized one of the inflatable Alma Mahler doll's breasts & wrenched as hard as she cld. The pitiful inflatable Alma Mahler doll had no chance: her mouth opened wide to scream. The Lazarine didn't miss her opportunity & shoved the orthodontic device flush into the inflatable Alma Mahler doll's mouth, deftly tying the straps at the back of her neck. The inflatable Alma Mahler doll's mouth was now as wide open as the mouth of a gargoyle.

The inflatable Alma Mahler doll froze in terror. Slavomira called for the Lazarine to prepare the carp.

"I grabbed the fish & I was ready to act. It happened in a flash."

 $\mbox{W/}$ the basted carp now protruding from her gargoyle mouth, & well tied to the bedhead, the inflatable Alma Mahler doll looked a pretty picture indeed.

The rest of the drama unfolded swiftly: while the Lazarine & Cuntisha supervised the force-feeding of the carp, Slavomira grabbed hold of a long-handled toilet brush & a bucket of warm soapy water &, addressing her attentions to the vulcanised rubber orifice only recently vacated, proceeded to clean the inflatable Alma Mahler doll's inner-person. Soon the inner-person shone, immaculate. This was not for the inflatable Alma Mahler doll's benefit, but that of the assembled crowd, by now visibly agitated: women in evening taffeta, men in dinner suits w/ patterned cummerbunds.

The inflatable Alma Mahler doll began to snivel, choking down carp in hope of freeing her mouth. But she had no means of getting the fish into

morsels she cld swallow, on account of the prickly orthodontic device. Making her eyes as expressive as possible, the inflatable Alma Mahler doll cast Slavomira looks which begged not to be made available to all & sundry. Slavomira told her that death by comparison wld be sweet. The inflatable Alma Mahler doll started to sob but she quickly shut up. She knew that worker solidarity was simply propaganda at the service of the Hegemonies.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF WERNHER VON B.

Wernher woke to find himself bound in a particularly painful stress position. He cld hear Papa Walt's voice dimly telling him he wld remain like that till he'd learnt the true meaning of submission. Wernher blinked uncomprehendingly. He recognised the interior of his office at the Lunar Philanthropic Society, but had no recollection of how he'd gotten there.

The last thing he remembered was a basement room in a freightyard, with a deadman pointing a camera at him. Some crazy bitch had hacked off the IMF chairman's head. Had all of that been just some kind of dream? He tried to call out to his secretary but his mouth was gagged. Panic mounted & then, as the minutes accumulated into hours, exhaustion & despair.

But as the day wore on & on, no numbness came to alleviate the discomfort of his bondage. Eventually Papa Walt's hologram reappeared & performed an inspection, then without a word left again. The demands of Wernher's body cldn't be denied & as the hours multiplied he felt his bowels spasm & heard the sound of trickling urine on the office shagpile. He cried w/humiliation as he did so.

Truly they had reduced him to nothing now. No dignity, no choice, just an anonymous instrument for the pleasure of the Corporation. At last he came to realise that even if by some miracle he did escape, it wld do him no good. There was no going back. The only reality was this agony & the man who had inflicted it & cld stop it. Papa Walt had complete power, complete control.

FIREWALL WITH ME



THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF WERNHER VON B. (EPISODE 2)

"You will now beg," commanded Papa Walt, "to be released."

W/out a second thought Wernher begged, "Please, mein Führer! Please untie me!"

"In due time," Papa Walt said, replying thinly.

Papa Walt now approached & set about calmly feeling deep into Wernher's anus. Wernher cldn't believe it as the fingers probed inside him.

"Please, mein Führer!" he wailed. "Let me go!"

No hint of expression passed over Papa Walt's face, he simply went on patiently working his fingers in & out. Wernher wept w/ the pain & humiliation but gradually, incredibly, in the midst of the pain he felt his groin being to flush with heat. He knew his cock would soon be taught & full, pushing up against its bonds. He felt the rectal mucus begin to lubricate as Papa Walt's movements became faster & more fluid.

Wernher groaned in absolute humiliation, he was practically crucified & still his body was being made to feel excitement. But he cldn't deny his own sensations. Slowly, just as the pain of the long day had escalated into agony, now the enforced pleasure began to escalate into ecstasy. Papa Walt's fingers were now sliding deep inside. It felt as if his whole hand was going up & Wernher's channel was trying to pull it further in.

W/ a cry of despair Wernher submitted to the madness of being taken to orgasm at exactly the same time as he was suffering the worst pain he'd endured since the War. His body spasmed.

PLAGUE CITY, BRÛLE-T-IL?

It was the ninth day of that circus of diseased queens holing up while the world burned, counting down to doomsday.

Bouzid's skin smelled of prescription drugs. When he talked he croaked like he had one of those computerised voice-boxes forced into behaviour it wasn't programmed for.

Cuntisha, waving a scalpel, proposed they draw straws to see who should perform an operation on it. They should cut out his arsehole, too, she menaced, so he'd have to carry a sack of shit around between his knees, instead of just being one.

Bouzid backed defensively away.

"I'm not sick, you bitches!"

The only thing that functioned normally was his paranoia. He'd been delirious since his coke supply'd run out.

Slavomira grabbed his arms & pinned him in a wrestler's lock. They took turns palpating the swollen glands.

"Last one w/ buboes this big needed a hacksaw job," Cuntisha grinned. She rolled him over & stuck a ship's barometer up his rectum. Bouzid screamed.

"Don't worry, honey, Plague won't touch us, coz we invented it."

THERE'RE NO "FREE AGENTS" OF THE WILL-TO-POWER

In the final analysis, the only concrete situation is abstraction. Like a dreary political reverie, society (& the individual within it) concocts its own "free

will" out of the circumstances of a concluded history, sketched out w/ broad strokes in the most beautiful cold blood, so that the future of which it dreams is already a dead epoch. So too we might say, the avantgardes of dead generations weigh like a nightmare on the brains of the living. The inevitable march of progress has always assumed the metrical form of an arrested cataclysm: a piling of catastrophic debris into an abstract, immaculate machinery. The machinery of the fait accompli.

The challenge, therefore, isn't simply to undertake a critique of the fact of alienation, as the prelude to an act of sedition against the collectivised ego. (It's necessary, in any case, to comprehend the inherence of alienative processes in the production of critique itself: as if being discovered, naked in a cinema, the object of the screen's avid attention.) The purpose of Švejkism isn't to resolve the seeming contradiction posed by alienation to the experience of "everyday life" (distracted by false choices). It is instead to intervene in the ideological solipsism of "emancipation from ideology," represented by the transparent myth of realism.

This intervention assumes the most viable form available to it: that of an equivalently radical ambivalence. The appropriation of radical ambivalence isn't a relativistic piling up of fragments w/out a goal, but a purposeful sabotage aimed at achieving specific effects. Ambivalence is the true "substance" of realism's transparent myth. It's appropriation & reinvention as a weapon of subversion & counter-construction provides the crucial & universally available means of disillusionment of mythic power.

- THE Š.V.E.J.K.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF WERNHER VON B. (EPISODE 3)

Time passed w/ agonizing slowness & in the silence Wernher distracted himself from the pain by trying to understand why Papa Walt was doing this to him. His waking state passed from stupor to delirium, punctuated by waves of searing pain, intense thirst, feelings of internal dissolution. Once again tears of pity sprang into his eyes.

Suddenly there was a hand in his hair & his head was turned to the side. Right in his face was a rigid sex. Wernher's gag was removed & the long shaft pushed into his mouth seeking his throat.

Wernher felt a rending agony as a second member forced its way into his anus. It grew worse & worse till he thought his flesh wld tear. He cld barely breathe. Bile rose in his throat. There was a moment of panic when he felt sure he wld choke.

"You're nothing," said the voice of Papa Walt. "D'you understand that?" Wernher tried to nod. Each of the phalluses rammed into him again & again like machine parts. After some time he cld no longer think.

"You're nothing," Papa's voice repeated.

The machine rhythm continued unabated. At a certain point Wernher fell into a sort of delirium. When he regained consciousness several days later, he cld no longer remember who he was.

"ART ONLY EXISTS TO BE USED, YOU POOR IDIOT"

The severely distressing event was no doubt the cause of an equally severe

mental anguish, as a result of which the patients' abilities to integrate emotional responses to changed conditions of reality were overwhelmed.

EVOLUTIONARY ESCAPE PLAN

It only matters to know where we're NOT going, said the gimp installing the EXIT sign.

THE ENLIGHTENMENT OF WERNHER VON B. (EPISODE 4)

Papa Walt spoke.

"Today, you Kraut sumbitch, the Church of Corporate Greed has taught you that those who G.O.D. put in mastery over you have the absolute authority to bestow pain or pleasure. We will bestow or inflict whichever pleases us. You have also learned that the worst thing that can happen to you is for yr masters to leave you."

"Jawohl, mein Führer!" came Wernher's immediate & fervent reply. There was now only one emotion he felt: gratitude.

ALL THEIR XMASSES CAME AT ONCE

There were machines everywhere, all sorts of machines, machines for living, machines for dying, machines for wiping yr arse.

THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES OF

Doctor Sidi Bouzid, having recovered his equanimity, stood in his socks berating the inflatable Alma Mahler doll tied naked to the bedposts. The doll's eyes popped as he stuffed a copy of the *Financial Times* between her teeth.

"The circulation of the blood produces this very same condition, but qualitatively, at the level of the cerebellum: front, solid; behind, transparent, & surrounded by..." he struggled to explain, waving a flaccid member in his hands, he was clearly a man on his last leas.

In this position, the lines of type now assumed a different character. Two opposite meanings: "I" is always "our," like feeling a pulse under the collarbone. Wolfensuck's name had been scissored-out of newsprint in ways that might overwhelm (& even contradict) the squeamish among you & pasted across the inflatable Alma Mahler doll's forehead.

"Everything's just how you decide to think about it," the Lazarine said.

"Can I play," Kid Katyusha entered from behind an arras. She was wearing combat fatigues cut-away at the crotch & thigh-high combat boots. From this vantage she cld've been Cuntisha's twin.

"I'm hypnotising her w/ my prick," Bouzid informed her, waving a piece of cabanossi in his hand. "I'm trying to make her mind as empty & blank as possible. It's better not to be emotional. Emotions confuse things."

The Lazarine, crosseyed from pills & sleeplessness, had gotten down on all fours in front of the doll, whose rubber sphincter was at eye-level. Slavomira was kneeling behind her.

"Fuck me while I tongue this little ingénue's arsehole," slurred the Lazarine. The chandeliers rattled. "It's the third time they've bombed us this evening," Bouzid complained, retiring to pour a snifter of brandy.

"I can't sleep at night," sobbed the Lazarine without warning, grabbing disconsolately at the inflatable Alma Mahler doll as Slavomira rotated her hips. "Sleep equals death & night's fearsome. When you fall asleep you're never sure of waking up again."

Kid Katyusha pulled out the Heckler&Koch & nailed the doll right between the eyes. It let out a gasp then slumped limply on the bed.

Bouzid meanwhile had brandy & snuff all over his chin.

"Damn, that was expensive, too,"

MYCOLOGY OF LATE CAPITALISM

On this spot, many years past, a plaque was set down which read:

"Here lies the great god DOLLAR BILL who, once upon a time, the loyal citizens all got down on their knees to at every unholy opportunity."

And ol' tightarse BILL, encouraging them to spread his enormous posterior a little wider so they cld all kiss the sacred ring right on the hole & a sickly discharge trickling down, bring out the hives all over their flesh & eyeballs. Like the old timers were wont to say, a sight as edifying as strychnine.

THE CITY RUNS BACKWARD AROUND THE CLOCKS

All it was, was a flea regurgitating blood. Xenopsylla cheopis. They built a whole system just on that. All the riches of the world, descending through the influence of the heavenly spheres like divine vengeance or an ill wind. The Black Debt. Westward at random from ghetto to ghetto, from market economy to market economy. Acral necrosis, chill, malaise, cramp, seizure, vomiting of blood. She caresses her engorged lymph nodes, her blotched lips. Death within three days. Bereavement is the signal for laughter. Who has seen such a thing with their own eyes?

MAMMON LOVES ONLY YOU

Humanity will only be happy when all the zeroes have lined up to be counted.

NYC JET BOMBERS: A FUTURIST FANTASY

"Hey, did you hear the news? A couple of cartoon planes just crashed the Twin Towers! Someone finally did it! And w/ cartoon planes!"

IT'S RIGHT TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE CONSTANTLY RECURRING POSSIBILITIES OF ALIENATION ARISING FROM THE VERY STRUGGLE AGAINST ALIENATION

Kid Katyusha stood atop Babelsberg Hill taking in the view with the Kraut's binoculars. The place looked like it'd never recover, like an asteroid had crash landed in the middle of the city & this was all just the beginning of the next big extinction event. But appearances could be deceiving. She knew it'd just be a matter of time before the street-cleaners got to work & the first tourists

arrived to kickstart the economy all over again, bigger & better. Can't let a little thing like the Plague stand in the way of progress. She sighted a tank column coming over the river, it was the first real sign of life she'd seen in days. Well, she grinned, it's not like anyone had a patent on optimism.

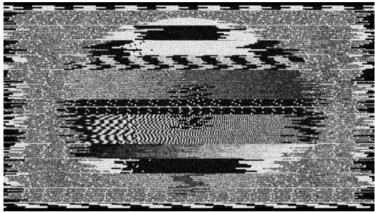
SHIP OF FOOLS

Look around. See any rats still here?

FIN DE CINÉMA

A burning train drifts out of the black over the elevated line.

IT WAS THEN THAT THE TRUTH WAS FINALY REVEALED



& ON THE TENTH DAY

It was the crashing that woke her, coming from the stairs. Then the howling through the doorway. Cuntisha dragged herself across the concrete to the blastdoors standing open on their massive hinges. Outside, plumes of smoke & teargas drifted over the rooftops. Like white jasmine. Like the whites of eyes erupting in the sun. La belle jeunesse!

Thoughts of joy & foreboding had jostled this past night for pre-eminence in the minds of those within the bunker's walls. Eruptions. Echoes of gunfire. Only time now separated them from a fate worse than their own. The armies of the sub-proletariat, swarming from their hives, wielding sticks, paving stones, righteous indignation. Hastate, principes, triari. The black hundreds, martyrs of the cause.

"They fear not the whip, the informer, the inquisition, the crucifixion on the mount."

This new-old terror, making target practice for the invading panzer

divisions. Tomorrow they mightn't exist. Tomorrow nothing might exist.

Cuntisha took in the scene. Sprawled on the bunker's proscenium, the Lazarine, that rotten sentimental cunt, was groaning in a drugged stupor. The Lazarine, paragon of aborted womanhood. The Lazarine, professional victim & ex-potato peeler w/ her snout in the trough. Oh her Valley of Tears knows no depths, the putrid swine! Tainted slut! Perishable commodity! Imbecile!

An assessment of the present situation also revealed: Slavomira, the nymphomaniac dwarf, transfixed by the effect of her own vomit dripping from her chin & running in a clotted stream between two lopsided conical breasts to pool between her legs. A broken compact-mirror provided her every possible vantage. Jeroboam in hand, she swigged. Champagne dribbled from each nostril. This was the sight that first greeted Doctor Sidi Bouzid as he entered from the stairwell, stepping over the prostrated Lazarine.

Bouzid, peace be upon him.

Bouzid, the beneficent, the merciful.

"Salaam allekum," he gesticulated, steering himself clear of the puke on the floor. "Behold, the masses have arranged a little entertainment for us."

He stood at the far edge of the proscenium where it jutted over the hillside, inhaling the air, savouring the faint whiff of burning petroleum. Slavomira got unsteadily to her feet, found an overturned trashcan to seat her delicate arse upon. Bouzid turned & winked at her.

"There's no greater madness, I've decided, than the present organisation of life."

Cuntisha sneered like he'd just said something completely idiotic. She cldn't believe the man was misquoting Marx in the face of catastrophe.

"We're all going to die," she said.

"Oh, you've only just realised? Good for you. As the prophet once said, When I saw the people in the streets, I was astonished to find empty hands. So I provided them w/ knives, so they might take freely & eat."

"Why don't you shut up & get me something to drink."

"The real good in politics is to make people happy," said Bouzid, ignoring her. "I remember being happy once. Do you?"

"Aaaaagh," groaned the Lazarine. Her head, w/ an oversized blonde wig piled atop of it, rose unsteadily from the concrete. Then followed the rest of her promiscuous body. W/ arms half-raised, she teetered in the direction of Bouzid, pudenda swaying visibly under pierced weight beneath the sheerest décolleté, like a zombie in heat. She barely made it three steps before the floor rushed up & slapped her in the face. Slavomira guffawed w/ a mouth full of champagne, spraying snot & cracking a tremendous fart, her eyes a mess of smeared mascara, broken capillary.

"Poor bitch can't even throw herself off the ledge," Cuntisha drawled.

The Lazarine twisted onto her back & let out an ear-splitting screech,
eyes revolving in blank confusion. The effect was not unflattering. The altered
symmetries had the benefit of a certain gratuitous injustice.

"I dreamed last night that I was shitting blood & all the little children wept," Dr Bouzid mused, sticking his index finger in the prostrate woman's mouth & twisting it around till she gagged. Then withdrew, holding the slicked finger up to the breeze. Sunlight made them glisten.

A volley of shots rang out across the hillside.

"North by northeast," Bouzid concluded. He sniffed the air & smiled

wearily. "If they don't bury the slaughtered thousands, we might be lucky & get a good stink brewing by lunchtime."

"Mgnööh," the Lazarine wailed, blood from her broken nose pasted the left side of her face, there was puke all down the front of her décolleté.

"I'm famished," belched Slavomira, tossing the jeroboam at the wall. It

fell w/ a clunk & rolled away over the proscenium ledge, shattering below.

Cuntisha pointed a badly manicured index finger at the human wreck
lying at Bouzid's feet:

"Why not eat her?"

"A capital idea!" smirked Bouzid. "A propitiatory offering to the gods!" He bent down & shouted in the delirious woman's ear.

"Lazarine, my sweet! We're going to eat you, what do you think of that?"

3 / Post-Scriptum

GOODNIGHT, SWEET NOTHINGS

"Am I alone?"

The survivor still wants to know if she's alone.

Outside there was no sign of life. I was working blindly. Everything was reflex, effects of oppositeness. In my mind I'd once again become an instrument. I found the flashlight in my right coat pocket & stepped over the debris. I imagined a map, the secret destination marked by an X. Between this world & the next. Rubbing out the body-chalk. Voices circled like flies beneath a dead lightbulb. The roads there stood still. Blank thresholds of deep image-rubble. Right then all laws were reversed.

===THE END===



"But these extravagant forebodings dwindled in the light of reason. True, the word 'Plague' had been uttered; true, at this very moment one or two victims were being seized & laid low by the disease. Still, that cld stop, or be stopped. It was only a matter of lucidly recognising what had to be recognised; of expelling extraneous shadows & doing what needed to be done. Then the Plague wld come to an end, because it was unthinkable, or, rather, because one thought of it on misleading lines. If, as was most likely, it died out, all wld be well. If not, one wld know it anyhow for what it was."

(Albert Camus)

"From an epidemic point of view, the Plague is the only disease exactly resembling art."

(Antonin Artaud)



The revolution is now. Plague City, year zero. A contemporary retelling of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, played-out against the backdrop of the 2000 Prague anti-globalisation riots, **DEATH MASK SUTRA** is a relentless parody of neoliberal economics & light-at-the-end-of-the-tunnel political irrealism.

